Commentary

Volume Fifty-six, Number Five, November 1973

On Soviet Dissidence

Lev Navrozov

The Stalemate Society
Rudolf Klein

A Poet of the Holocaust
Robert Alter

To the Country
Bette Howland

Two Conductors
B. H. Haggin

Jews & the Tragic Sense
Frederick Plotkin

Movie Chronicle
William S. Pechter

American Writers and Their Critics

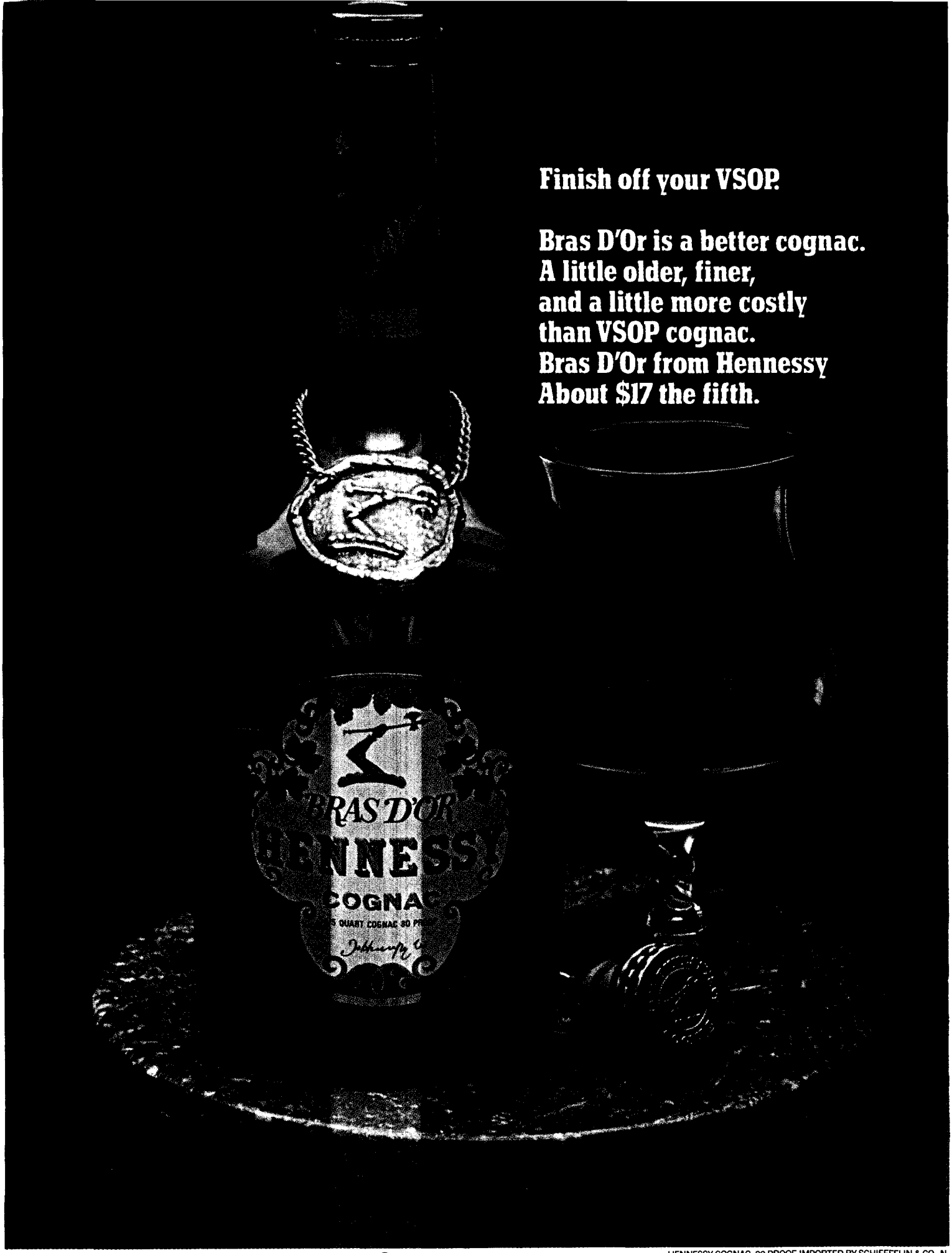
John W. Aldridge

Jack Richardson

BOOKS IN REVIEW: David Herbert Donald/Richard Schickel/Alan Goldfein/Johanna Kaplan/Stanley Rothman/Carl Gershman

Published by the American Jewish Committee/$1.25

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



HENNESSY COGNAC. 80 PROOF. IMPORTED BY SCHIEFFELIN & CO., N.

Hennessy The Classic Cognac Of France.

LICENSED FOR PERSONAL USE
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You expect more from American and you get it.™

because

we want you to come back.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Commentary

VOLUME 56 NUMBER 5 *NOVEMBER 1973*

Articles
31 On Soviet Dissidence *Lev Navrozov*
37 Afterthoughts on the 20's *John W. Aldridge*
42 The Stalemate Society *Rudolf Klein*
48 To the Country *Bette Howland*

In the Community
57 A Poet of the Holocaust *Robert Alter*

Observations
64 The Working Critic *Jack Richardson*
67 Two Conductors *B. H. Haggin*
71 Jews and the Tragic Sense *Frederick Plotkin*

Movies
74 Nostalgia and Adultery *William S. Pechter*

Letters
4 from *Celia Morris, André Albert Aciman, Cynthia Ozick, Arnold Beichman, H. L. Levy, Maurice Friedberg, Elkanah Schwartz, Richard M. Fellman, A. L. Malakoff, Lionel Abel, Joseph Nedava, Joel Carmichael, Eliezer Livneh, Shlomo Avineri, Meyer Weisgal,* and others

Books in Review
78 The Idea of Fraternity in America, by Wilson Carey McWilliams *David Herbert Donald*
80 Travelers, by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala *Johanna Kaplan*
84 The Dialectical Imagination, by Martin Jay *Stanley Rothman*
88 The Country and the City, by Raymond Williams *Alan Goldfein*
90 Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies and Bucks, by Donald Bogle; The Only Good Indian . . . The Hollywood Gospel, by Ralph and Natasha Friar *Richard Schickel*
94 SDS, by Kirkpatrick Sale *Carl Gershman*

Editor: Norman Podhoretz
Executive Editor: Neal Kozodoy
Managing Editor: Marion Magid
Associate Editors: Brenda Brown, Maier Deshell
Contributing Editors: Robert Alter, Milton Himmelfarb, Walter Laqueur
Business Manager: Ronald Greene
Production Manager: Bruce Lodi
Cover: The Drawing Board, Inc.

COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $1.25; $12 a year; 3 years $32; 5 years $48—Add $2.00 per year for Canada and Latin America; $3.00 for other foreign—Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

Copyright © 1973 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions—Indexed in *Readers' Guide, Book Review Digest, Public Affairs Information Service, Index to Jewish Periodicals, ABC Pol Sci, Historical Abstracts,* and *America: History and Life—Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.*

EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Does an Italian wine go with Noël, La Navidad, Hanukkah and Weihnachten?

Bolla does.

It has a gift for celebration.

A handsome wooden rack filled with 6 bottles of delightful Bolla wine imported from Italy.* About $20. Feel free to give the Bolla Gift Selection to anyone, any time. It will be the nicest compliment a holiday ever had. No matter what language you feast in.

Bolla
Gift Selection

*2 bottles each of Soave and Bardolino, 1 each Valpolicella and Rosé.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Statement of Aims

In sponsoring COMMENTARY, the American Jewish Committee aims to meet the need for a journal of significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues. Its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view and belief, and it hopes to encourage original creative endeavor in the various fields of culture. The opinions and views expressed by COMMENTARY's contributors and editors are their own, and do not necessarily express the Committee's viewpoint or position. The sponsorship of COMMENTARY by the Committee is in line with its general program to enlighten and clarify public opinion on problems of Jewish concern, to fight bigotry and protect human rights, and to promote Jewish cultural interest and creative achievement in America.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Elmer L. Winter, *President*

The Commentary Publication Committee
Maurice Glinert, *Chairman*

Eli M. Black
Donald M. Blinken
Charles D. Breitel
Edward E. Elson
Richard C. Ernst
Robert H. Haines
Sydney M. Kaye
Lewis J. Laventhol
Richard Maass
Bess Myerson
Ned Pines
Frederick P. Rose
David Sher
John Slawson
Harry Steiner
Alan M. Stroock*
Laurence A. Tisch
Ben Touster
Gerard Weinstock

**Honorary Member*

Letters from Readers

Virginia Woolf

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Cynthia Ozick's article ["Mrs. Virginia Woolf," August] is simply fascinating. And I'm glad to see COMMENTARY devote so much space to considering a writer who, until recently, was slighted even in the universities in this country. I have an undergraduate major and a Ph.D. in English literature, and I was never given a reading list that included something of Virginia Woolf's. I even remember Yvor Winters's referring, some years ago, to "the iridescent triflings of Mrs. Woolf." Which is nonsense. Perhaps even better, Miss Ozick reminds us of a time when intellectuals and artists nourished one another's gifts and richly honored one another's sensibilities. Though she gives us good reason to question how entirely their ideals were realized, she looks respectfully to a group who seriously believed each should have a fine and generous sense of the other's feelings; violation of friendship was tantamount to cardinal sin. From the distance of New York in the 70's, such sustained human response seems part of a small Golden Age.

CELIA MORRIS
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thought Cynthia Ozick's piece on Virginia Woolf was simply superb, one of the best things you've run this year.

RICHARD SCHICKEL
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . There are today many short-sighted, mostly-metropolitan critics who herald a certain view which, repeated and repeated over and over again, has somehow managed to wind itself into irrefutable dogma: namely, the opinion that the artist is a "rebel" and the more he shuns tradition the more honorable he becomes. . . .

Cynthia Ozick's article suffers from this most contagious malady. Her article, though filled with brilliant insights here and there, champions a romanticized vision of artistic creation. . . . Of course, the trend in modern criticism is the edification of a hero or the deification of a martyr. No one, after all, can resist making a Prometheus or a Hyperion of every artist.

Virginia Woolf was a brilliant writer when she did not *try* to write. Witness her essays and her diary: they are first-rate. Everyone knew her to be a critic gifted with a keen literary intellect. Her judgments are, to say the very least, most sound, and I share wholeheartedly her assessment of Joyce, as I do her appraisal of Thomas Hardy. Nevertheless, I strongly question Virginia Woolf as genius—since that word is not sparingly used in Miss Ozick's article. If one compares her work with that of Proust, Joyce, Mann, or Svevo . . . one has to admit in all honesty that her star is not that which shineth most nor her muse that which singeth best. That she lags behind and loses ground with the others is obvious. But . . . by how much? The answer is, unfortunately, not by a hair's width. Her handling of the "flash" is in no way as effective as Joyce's epiphany in, say, "The Dead," where a simple quatrain evokes the long forgotten memory of Michael Furey, nor as powerful as Proust's *madeleine* which remains today the best example of what Proust himself calls *"analogie."* . . . E. M. Forster, who admired Mrs. Woolf very much, was at a loss for a compliment when she presented him with a copy of one of her novels, the reason being that he felt it deserved no compliment.

Then, of course, one must mention Virginia Woolf's prose. Personally, I find it too mellifluous, too mushy with stifled tears to be taken seriously. And though I wouldn't go so far as to say—as I would in the case of Anaïs Nin—that the only hope left for her style is that it might gain in translation, I still find it as saccharine and as indigestible as a cup of tea with four teaspoons of sugar. However, if that is what goes under the name of "poetical prose," then I strongly suggest one take another look at Joyce's more sober passages in *Ulysses* or at Proust's description of Albertine's sleep. To be quite

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The great width of Canada, west across the continent from the St. Lawrence River Valley to Vancouver, is home to the beaver. And to Canadian Lord Calvert as well. But there's more to this great Canadian than mere geography. There's a subtle, smooth rarity that only the most skillful marriage of fine Canadian whiskies can achieve. And does . . . in Canadian Lord Calvert . . . the all-Canadian whisky.

THE BEAVER (CASTOR CANADENSIS): GREAT CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER FOUND IN CANADA FROM LABRADOR TO BRITISH COLUMBIA. CALVERT DIST. CO., N.Y.C.

There's no Canadian more Canadian than Canadian Lord Calvert.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

KENYA KOUPON

Please send me all the exciting New information about Kenya Holidays. Dept. 15

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ Zip_____

State_____

KENYA

Rush this Koupon to your travel agent or to us.

KENYA TOURIST OFFICE
15 East 51st Street
N.Y., N.Y. 10022
(212) 486-1300

For Men and Women

Goose Down Bootees for Frigid Tootsies

For instant old-fashioned fireplace warmth, just ease those chilly feet into the luxurious softness of Bauer Goose Down quilted in long-wearing *Expedition Nylon. Soft leather soles.* Insulating foam insole. Give shoe size and we will send a perfect fit. **Color:** Powder Blue for Women, Taupe for Men. Only **$14.95** postpaid. Makes a perfect Christmas Gift.

Order today! Money-back guarantee!

Enclosed is my check or money order for $_____. (Add sales tax where applicable.)
Please RUSH my Goose Down Bootees.
Men's 0146 Size_____
Women's 0149 Size_____
Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____
☐ Send me FREE your new color catalog of over 1000 exciting outdoor products.

Eddie Bauer®

Dept. CCM · Seattle, Wash. 98124

candid, I find Virginia Woolf's diary more engaging than her novels; the outline of *The Years* or of *To the Lighthouse* as noted in her diary far surpasses the novels in their finished form. I hesitate to use the word "effeminate" with reference to her style, but then I could point to Jane Austen or to Emily Brontë for excellence in feminine prose or, for that matter, to Katherine Mansfield, whom I deem by far superior to Mrs. Woolf. In fact, Virginia Woolf never liked Katherine Mansfield and in her diary, harboring a sense of rivalry (not to say envy), she does not make use of the name K. without casting a silent aspersion. . . . It is a real pity that Katherine Mansfield should have such a large reading public in France and such a meager one in English-speaking countries. Virginia Woolf herself confesses somewhere in her diaries that she had a greater facility with situations than with plots. She wasn't the least proud when she wrote it. She knew what that meant, she knew it to be her weak spot, and no reader today, no E. M. Forster, could read *To The Lighthouse* without knowing, to use a common idiom, whether he is coming or going. No, Mrs. Virginia Woolf was not a genius, and though the feminist movement today would very much like to flaunt her as the victim of a uxorious husband, as a martyr of her times, as proof of feminine genius (if that indeed is what feminine genius is) they have picked the wrong heroine for the wrong reasons. . . .

ANDRÉ ALBERT ACIMAN
New York City

CYNTHIA OZICK writes:

Too mushy with stifled tears to be taken seriously, I would nevertheless like to sob over one or two of André Albert Aciman's critical propositions—over his view of Joyce, for instance. Reminding us that the world values Joyce much more than Virginia Woolf (more than a hair's width, anyhow), and comparing the work of both, Mr. Aciman (later on he will hint at his scorn for "poetical prose") points out "in all honesty that her star is not that which shineth most nor her muse that which singeth best." And yet he insists that he "share[s] wholeheartedly [Virginia Woolf's] assessment of Joyce." This is impressive: Virginia Woolf, as my essay noted, found Joyce "ultimately nauseating."

For Mr. Aciman to assign a superior star and a melodious muse to that very James Joyce who is, he wholeheartedly agrees, ultimately nauseating, demonstrates in Mr. Aciman not only an unusually generous spirit but a critical judgment that is an instructive model for his remaining remarks—especially those on romanticized vision and effeminate prose.

Watergate and the Presidency

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Aaron Wildavsky's article ["Government and the People," August] raises anew, and in striking fashion, the most serious questions about the future of the American constitutional system. The article's pathbreaking significance is to have placed Watergate into the context of a long overdue redefinition of the purposes of government. Watergate didn't happen because a handful of terribly ordinary people mistook themselves for philosopher-kings. The subversion of the American constitutional system attempted by the Watergate conspirators was aided by the piecemeal alteration of that system, over many years, from one of separate institutions—President, Congress, the Courts—sharing powers to a system of all-power-to-the-people participatory, communitarian democracy in which power would run directly to the President in the name of the People. In other words, President Nixon and his White House *camarilla* were exploiting for their purposes what had become the favorite design of New Left politics. This is not to blame the New Left for Watergate. It is to indicate that, as so often has happened since the Bolshevik Revolution, the differences between the so-called Left and Right may not be differences at all.

In actual fact, our constitutional system depends for its successful functioning on a fourth institution which has no constitutional existence: political parties. The most famous of the *Federalist Papers*, No. 10, inveighed against them, reflecting the Washington-Madison-Hamilton animosity toward parties as "factions." Yet when it came to the realities of governing "the first new nation" and assuring an orderly transfer of power from an incumbent administration to a victorious political party in opposition, the Founding Fathers substituted experience for ideology. They "constitutionalized" political

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shown: La Corona #400, all natural leaf, long filler.

Tradition

That's why La Coronas have been one of the pleasures of fine living for over 60 years.

We're proud of our traditions.

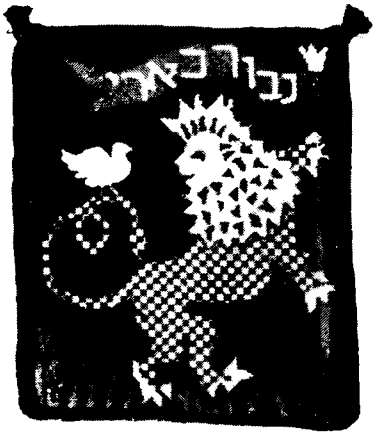
From generation to generation, we pass on the skills of craftsmanship and quality that make La Corona a consistently satisfying cigar.

And that's why La Coronas have become a part of so many traditional celebrations, like Bar Mitzvahs and weddings.

La Corona Cigars. The mark of excellence. Make them one of your traditions.

LA CORONA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



A GIFT TO BE TREASURED!

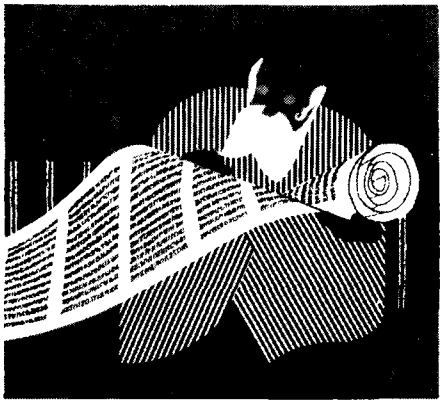
THE WORK OF OUR HANDS
Jewish Needlecraft for Today
MAE SHAFTER ROCKLAND

A one-of-a-kind book that is both a guide to the techniques of needlecraft and to the graphic elements appropriate to the Jewish tradition.

"A delight to look at, to hold, to read, and to follow as a guide for beautiful, meaningful projects in the Jewish tradtition." —*American Jewish Life*

165 illustrations, 16 in color
$10.00 at your bookstore or from

SCHOCKEN BOOKS
200 Madison Avenue, New York 10016



From the Land of Sheba
Tales of the Jews of Yemen
Collected and Edited by S. D. Goitein

A fascinating presentation of what has been one of the most intriguing Jewish communities in the world, and which, since its near-total emigration to Israel, has exerted a profound cultural influence on the modern Jewish state. FROM THE LAND OF SHEBA offers a history of the Yemenite Jews, plus a selection of their tales which are akin to the *Arabian Nights* in their combination of romance and humor.

$7.50 at your bookstore or from

SCHOCKEN BOOKS
200 Madison Avenue, New York 10016

parties and thus avoided the excesses of plebiscitary democracy and, in Mr. Wildavsky's phrase, a "plebiscitary Presidency." President Nixon attempted to deconstitutionalize the party system by transforming both political parties into a Presidential appanage; he almost succeeded. Not only did he ignore the Republican party *qua* party and actively oppose candidates of his own party—other Presidents have done the same thing in greater or lesser degree—but he also sought something different: to bring about non-party government through the creation of a Presidential party organized along personalist lines.

The Watergate mafia sought not only to delegitimize the Democratic party, it sought to delegitimize the Republican party as well. Previous Presidents have had their troubles with the party system, but the exigencies of warmaking and foreign-policy crises probably discouraged FDR, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson from engaging in any remaking of the parties. (General Eisenhower left the parties alone because, with Senator Lyndon Johnson as leader of the Loyal Opposition, there was no need to combat them.) It is no coincidence at all that the Nixon campaign to establish non-party government came with the ending of the Vietnam war and the waning need for bipartisan support to prosecute that war.

The anti-politics of the Nixon administration reveals a sad ignorance of how a large, powerful, and democratic country should be run. Without the mediation, the brokerage, of organized political parties, a stable American polity becomes difficult to obtain. Political parties exist to take the heat off elected representatives, to make possible a Burkean relationship between voter and legislator; they exist to negotiate with clamant pressure groups whose power they measure not by decibel output but by vote input. In a heterogeneous society, parties are administered by politicians or, as Mayor Lindsay called them quite accurately, "power brokers." New York City is ungovernable for many reasons, not least of which is the debilitation of political parties, a process which began with Fiorello H. La Guardia (in his three mayoral campaigns, he ran under nine different party labels) and reached its climax with Mayor Lindsay, who couldn't run for reelection in 1973 under any party label.

The weakening or even disintegration of effective (not responsible) political parties leads to instability if not to ungovernability of a democratic polity because it removes from the political process an unideological organized interest group capable of brokering for ideological "single-issue" interest groups. In other words, as politician-brokers, parties are compromisers, trimmers, sell-out artists, amoralists, what you will; they are not, however, rule-or-ruin ideologues. In a democratic society, ideological politics are no politics at all. In the 1972 elections the Nixon administration came closer than any administration in history to producing an end of politics. It was a process furthered considerably by the McGovern campaign, which dismantled the Democratic party in favor of a personalist machine. Is it not striking that none of the Watergate conspirators could be described as a professional politician? The Haldemans and the Ehrlichmans thought that the United States could be run "scientifically," without politics; they have since learned better.

As he nears the end of his long political career President Nixon finds himself alone with few enthusiastic supporters even in what would be called his own party. In whose political-party interest is it that President Nixon should succeed? What 1974 GOP candidate for Congress or Governor—particularly in a tight race—will seek a Nixon endorsement or a Nixon campaign appearance in a local constituency? A President who tries to take on everybody, including political allies in his own party, ends up crippled, unless he has the temperament and the *apparat* of a Stalin. Nixon has neither, although he did seek his own version of a "one-party" state.

Watergate is not merely something for Senators and newspapers to examine to insure that it does not happen again. Watergate also means that the political parties in the country should see to it that they are not ever again so weakened as to become superfluous to politics. This is not a call for the return of powerful political bosses like Mark Hanna or Boies Penrose or political machines like Tammany. (Is New York a better place to live in since the fall of Tammany?) It is a call to realize that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

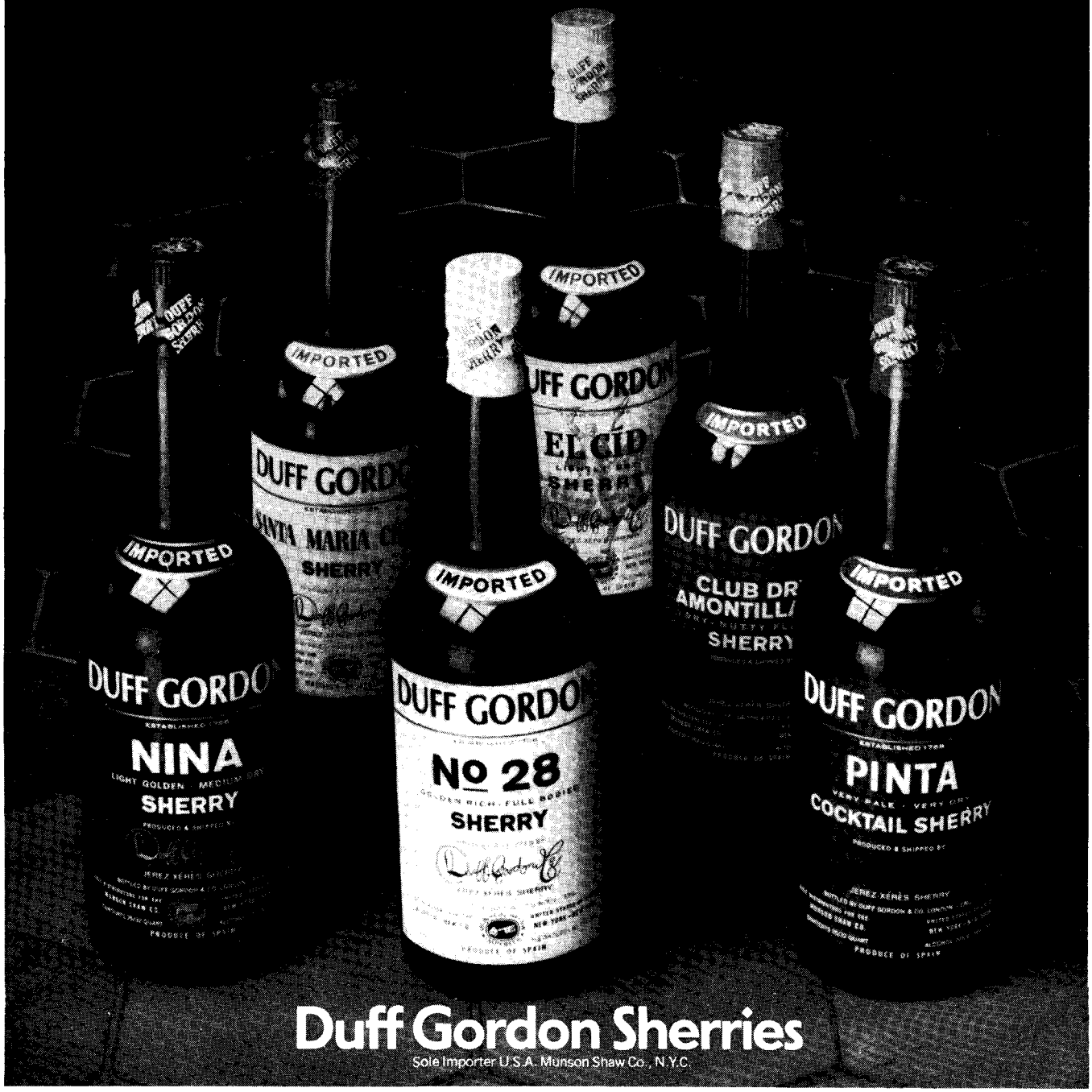
Six Great Sherries. One Great Name. Duff Gordon.

If you're a Sherry drinker, you know that the Duff Gordon name means great Sherry. It has meant that since 1768.

Today, the Duff Gordon name lives on in six great Sherries ranging from very sweet to very dry. Santa Maria Cream. No. 28. Nina. El Cid. Club Dry Amontillado. And Pinta.

So no matter what your taste may be in Sherry there's a Duff Gordon Sherry that will suit your taste.

Duff Gordon. Six great Sherries. One great name.



Duff Gordon Sherries

Sole Importer U.S.A. Munson Shaw Co., N.Y.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

political parties are not some luxury which we can do without. Parties are also part of the checks-and-balance system. Watergate has shown how ethically corrupt politics without parties can become.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN
University of Massachusetts
Boston, Massachusetts

The Judenräte

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Some few words should be added to Maurice Friedberg's "The Question of the *Judenräte*" [July]. His closing comment on Isaiah Trunk's book, *Judenrat,* is that it is a record of separate details, "rarely stopping to offer general observations." Yet how many historical works have been defaced by an author's irresistible desire to write that final chapter giving expression to his own sociological theories? . . . I feel Dr. Trunk is to be congratulated on limiting himself to the facts. The author's dispassionate style . . .—flat, pedantic, as dull as a ledger of bookkeeper's entries—provides an acute counterpoint to the horrors of his subject matter. . . . For me, probably because like most American Jews I can identify with my kinsmen's fate without having a true sense of its reality, the book is profoundly depressing. The volume is a record of pillage, rapine, and murder, viewed from the vantagepoint of men who were forced to become accessories to the most monstrous crimes, committed not by outlaws—which is comprehensible—but by the established agencies of government. . . . For me the most poignant story Dr. Trunk relates is how in Kaunas, when the members of the Jewish Council realized that they were required to make a choice of ghetto residents to be murdered, a choice for which nothing in their prior experience had prepared them, they went to the venerable rabbi of the community for advice, and he, after hearing them, fainted dead away.

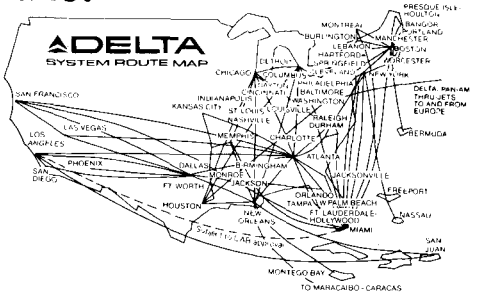
The phrase has lost its currency, but the members of the Jewish councils were *common men,* . . . ordinary persons. In many instances, their avocation was charity—social work. Indeed, the most precise chapters of Dr. Trunk's book are those devoted to descriptions of charitable endeavors: the budgets, the creation of soup kitchens, employment, living allowances. Where the book becomes diffuse is the point where Dr. Trunk turns

Delta is an air line run by professionals. Like Bob Pickett, Customer Services Supervisor.

He runs a busy Delta downtown ticket office. One minute he's on the phone solving a knotty fare problem. The next minute he's laying out an 8,000-mile itinerary. Or booking a package vacation. Or preparing tickets for 100 people on a group flight.

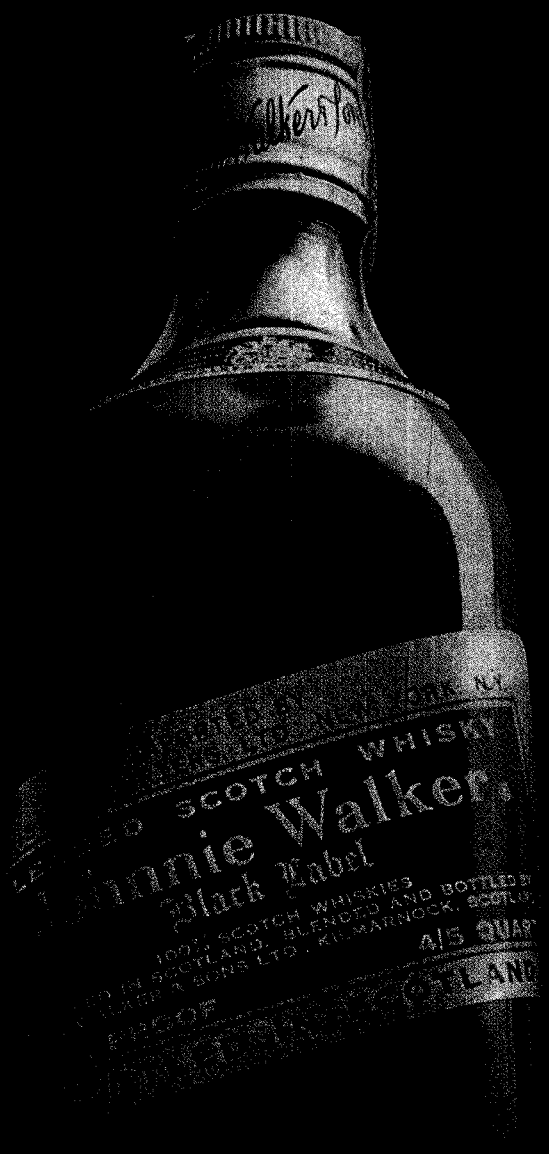
But Bob Pickett's never too busy to treat you like the VIP you are.

Delta is ready when you are.

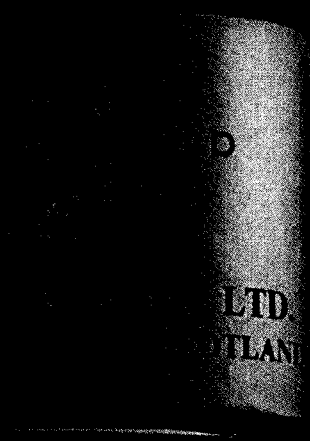


Delta's Wide-Ride™ DC-10 gives "comfort" a whole new meaning. Two-by-two seats in both Tourist and First Class. Now Delta has the 747, the 727-200 and the DC-10 in its Wide-Ride fleet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



As you're fighting your way to the top
it helps to have a taste of what's up there.



ABOUT $10 A FIFTH. PRICES MAY VARY ACCORDING TO STATE AND LOCAL TAXES. 12 YEAR OLD BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY. 86.8 PROOF. BOTTLED IN SCOTLAND. IMPORTED BY [illegible]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from economic history to social history. . . .

Dr. Trunk records without irony what is known of some of the discussions among the members of the *Judenräte* as to whether they should follow Maimonides's moral injunction to die rather than become accessories to the murder of their fellow Jews. The retort was that these were modern times and old-fashioned rules no longer applied. . . . What we tend to forget is that the *Judenräte* were part of a world in which all the great words had already been cancelled (to adapt Barbara Tuchman's quotation from D. H. Lawrence). And so, in the knowledge that the aged, the sick, and the young were probably doomed anyway, either through starvation or epidemics, and in the face of calculated Nazi brutality, the *Judenräte* cooperated in the delivery of ghetto inmates for "resettlement" to the gas chambers and mass graves.

Can we say with Hannah Arendt that millions fewer would have died if the *Judenräte* had refused to cooperate? The chances are that if there had been no ghetto governing body to administer rationing, control epidemics, and manage affairs, Nazi pillage might have been reduced—fewer furs and other valuables in Nazi coffers—but there would have been more deaths from starvation and epidemics. . . . The real issue is a moral one. In that sense Maimonides's injunction is as true today as when he issued it. He understood what the modern world has forgotten in a blaze of technological progress: the moral dimensions of our universe remain constant. . . .

Ultimately, it is good to know what happened and it is fitting and proper to mourn these many dead who have no one left to memorialize them. Precisely for this reason, it is unseemly to seek to cast blame. In the response to an evil scourge, mistakes were made. It could not be otherwise. Human nature is frail and prone to error. It is left to us to honor the memory of those who died. More cannot be said, less cannot be asked.

H. L. LEVY

New York City

MAURICE FRIEDBERG writes:

I have no quarrel with H. L. Levy's thoughtful letter. Indeed, our one disagreement is a matter of pure conjecture. In my article I tried to suggest that the value of Isaiah Trunk's important book might have been enhanced by some effort at a synthesis, and that his failure to attempt one may have been caused by an excess of scholarly modesty. Mr. Levy obviously does not share this view, and is therefore grateful that Dr. Trunk resisted the urge to "deface" a good book with "his own sociological theories." But our differences may have deeper roots as well. Perhaps, as the letter suggests, it is difficult for an American Jew to grasp the reality of the Holocaust. A Polish Jew myself, I know that reality, but continue to grope for its meaning.

Day Schools

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . David Singer's article ["The Growth of the Day-School Movement," August] . . . is especially noteworthy for its recognition that the day schools constitute a "movement," and Mr. Singer is to be commended for calling attention to the growing role of these schools in American life in general and American-Jewish life in particular. . . . But the article does not contain any discussion, or even a listing, of the various communal forces involved in the development of the day-school movement. . . . Perhaps Mr. Singer knew that to begin giving credit would have meant compiling almost a complete Who's Who in American-Jewish life. . . . Yet . . . everyone ever associated, no matter how remotely, with the day-school movement would agree on the vital role played in this effort by Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. Founded in 1945, it has functioned ever since as the only such communal effort devoted exclusively to the day school. A movement has to begin somewhere, and although there were day schools in existence before Torah Umesorah, it was the creation of this agency that marked the birth of the movement. . . .

ELKANAH SCHWARTZ

Brooklyn, New York

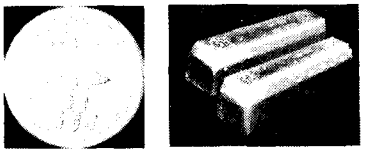
TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I am involved in the operation, or more accurately, the creation of a small, nonaffiliated community school, of the type David Singer calls "interdenominational." I think this school will be a harbinger of many more. . . . But there should also be more public discussion . . . about who really sends their children to day schools. . . . First, those who are religiously committed . . . : many children come from homes of Jews involved professionally in the Jewish community, and many others come from homes where one or another parent is himself the son or daughter of a rabbi, a cantor, a Jewish communal worker, or a lay leader in the Jewish community. . . . I have also been amazed at the number of children in our own school who come from homes where one or even both parents are converts to Judaism.

But what of the people who think about sending their children and then don't? These . . . include families where one parent wants to send the child but will not argue for it against a spouse. In these cases one cannot help but wonder what role the social acceptability, or lack of it, of a particular day school plays in the parents' decision.

I continue to be amazed when I hear parents tell me that they acknowledge the advantage of combining secular and religious instruction, acknowledge the quality of the secular program, understand

PURE
Silver
TODAY'S BEST BARGAIN FOR YOUR DOLLAR



UNIVERSAROS AND SILVER BARS*
AND FOR A SECURE TOMORROW
Today silver is worth twice what it was, tomorrow it will be worth even much more. Buy silver today, be sure of a safe tomorrow.
IMC MINT CORP.
Successor to International Mint Corp and International Silver Mint Corp.
315 East Second South • Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
CALL TOLL FREE (800) 453-4263 / OPEN SATURDAYS
Available in platinum, too!
GET THE FACTS TODAY! Send for FREE BROCHURE
ORDER DIRECT FROM THE FACTORY AND SAVE

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____
No obligation, naturally

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I love you for your mind.

KAHLÚA® & Coffee. What a cozy idea.

Kahlúa added to steaming hot coffee. Further enhanced by a twist of lemon or lime. Try to beat this soul-satisfying taste. Delicious!

After all, when it comes to enjoying a truly great liqueur, we wrote the book. The Kahlúa Recipe Book. Free for the sending. Because you deserve something nice.

Kahlúa. Coffee Liqueur from Sunny Mexico. 53 Proof. ■ Jules Berman & Assoc., 116 No. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90048

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Last night, the Ambassador was seen at Vivian's place.

And Kim's. And Linda's. And Erika's.

Ambassador. Representing Scotch at its lightest.

BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY, 86 PROOF. THE JOS. GARNEAU CO., NEW YORK, N.Y. © 1972.
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the greater amount of free time the child will have, and then still say they don't want their child involved. Often they add that they want their child to go to a school where he "meets all kinds of other children" and experiences the "real world."

I wonder, though, how "real" the child's experience is when he goes to the typical neighborhood school . . . which often excludes Catholic children, usually excludes black children, almost entirely excludes children from recent immigrant and other minority groups, and rarely includes any child except those from homes economically interchangeable with the child's own home. . . .

Parents today who argue in favor of the "melting pot" experienced by their own parents, or even grandparents, are oblivious to the fact that those homes were Jewish . . . and the children went out to become Americans, while today the average home in America, Jewish or Gentile, is the same, and Jews are forced to send their children out of the house to become Jews. And where do they send them? To synagogue schools which . . . , by almost unanimous agreement, are institutions that have tragically failed in their real purpose.

Some people have said that it takes an unusual amount of self-confidence and a feeling of security about one's own position and status to be a Jew in America who sends his children to a day school at the same time that he feels committed to life as an American and as a Jew. Perhaps there are very few of us who feel this secure, and possibly this in itself is a symptom of a far greater problem.

For my part, I do not know how secure I feel, but I do want my children to have the best chance for security available to them, and I feel that nothing will help them better than a solid background, knowledge, and understanding of their origin and history. . . .

RICHARD M. FELLMAN
(STATE SENATOR)
Omaha, Nebraska

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Singer's "The Growth of the Day-School Movement" is quite remarkable for its broad insights. In dealing with the non-Hasidic two-thirds of the population, he might also have pinpointed one of the most pronounced problems of the day-school movement: how to create in students a specifically Jewish attitude, and instill in them a dedication to the Jewish community rather than produce only "Jewishly informed and formally observant" versions of the prevailing American middle-class education. . . . The Jewish day school deserves community support only if it inculcates a philosophy and an attitude of *duty* which would make it more than just another private school. . . .

EDITH F. BONDI
Houston, Texas

Vaccination and Sacrifice

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is, perhaps, not so difficult as Lionel Abel ["Science versus Justice," July] perceives to find "any real circumstance in which humanity requires the sacrifice of someone innocent." Take, for example, the practice of vaccination against smallpox. In the mid-60's, a British physician calculated that thirty children a year died in that country as a result of the compulsory vaccination procedures related to school entrance. (In the United States the results of vaccination have been described as including ½ of 1 per cent who suffered serious side-effects.) The physician pointed out that smallpox in Britain was then so rare as to be considered nonexistent and argued that compulsory vaccination should end. His argument was apparently on the point of acceptance, when a smallpox outbreak occurred in the country, presumably introduced by travelers from Pakistan. Mass campaigns were instituted for adults as well. There are no apparent grounds to assume that the statistical results of vaccination have changed.

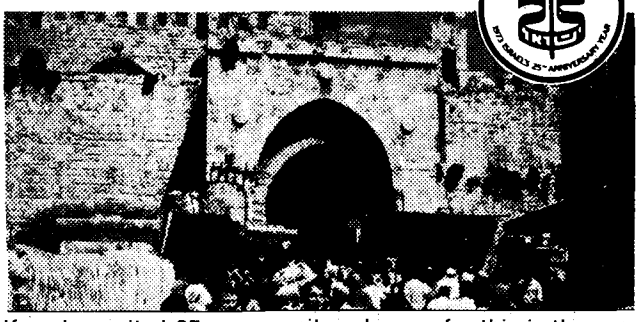
Does Mr. Abel remember that at the time Nicolà Chiaromonte was giving his lectures, Shirley Jackson was publishing "The Lottery"?

A. L. MALAKOFF
Grand Lancy, Switzerland

LIONEL ABEL writes:

I think A. L. Malakoff indicates, by his communication, that it is indeed difficult, as I said in my piece, to find "any real circumstance in

Israel is 25 years YOUNG this year. GO!



If you've waited 25 years, wait no longer, for this is the year of *all* years to go! See Israel in its 25th year of Statehood. If you've gone before, go again—each time it's a thrilling, inspiring, exhilarating experience! And there is no better, more luxurious, more relaxing way to get there than with the Greek Line, the favorite of so many thousands, the Golden Route to Israel. We have for you spacious, beautiful cabins, Continental/American cuisine or gourmet Kosher meals, under the strictest supervision (a Rabbi and Synagogue grace our ships), sun-drenched decks, open-air and indoor swimming pools, spacious lounges, wonderful nightclub entertainment, ballrooms, the latest movies, lectures, Hebrew lessons, seminars. And we get you to Israel for the major religious and cultural festivities. Go!

SAILING DATES: From New York—March 11, Nov. 12*, 1974.
*Following day from Boston

QUEEN ANNA MARIA • OLYMPIA
Fully air conditioned and stabilized

For colorful folder, reservations, call your Travel Agent or Greek Line
32 Pearl Street, New York, N.Y. 10004. Tel. (212) 943-9140

Greek Line
Registry: Greece

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GENERAL DIRECTOR
FOR
EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTION
IN ISRAEL

World Union of Jewish Students seeks General Director for its WUJS INSTITUTE (MACHON ARAD) Arad, Israel. This Institute offers young graduates from all over the world a one year combined work-study program. The position requires a young, creative individual with administrative abilities, a good and committed knowledge of Hebrew and Judaism, plus interest and experience in education. Having lived in Israel is a distinct advantage. Please send all letters and resumés to:

WUJS
247 Grays Inn Road
London, WC1, England

From Israel, By Jet . . .

THE JERUSALEM POST
WEEKLY OVERSEAS EDITION

Airmailed every Tuesday from Jerusalem, this renowned English language newspaper will help you better understand and anticipate tomorrow's headlines from Israel and the Middle East.

1 YEAR $25 — 2 YEARS $45
3 YEARS $65

MAIL COUPON TODAY

To: The Jerusalem Post Weekly
Suite 506, 104 East 40th Street
New York, N.Y. 10016

Please send THE JERUSALEM POST WEEKLY to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

☐ CHECK ENCLOSED.
☐ PLEASE BILL ME. C-11

which humanity requires the sacrifice of someone innocent." Certainly the example he gives, the practice of vaccination against smallpox, does not prove the contrary. What if in the mid-60's some thirty children died in England as a result of compulsory vaccination? Society did not require that any of the children who had been vaccinated should die, society merely required that they be vaccinated. The instance of Mr. Malakoff exemplifies not the sacrifice of the innocent, but the fate of the unlucky, lamentable, to be sure, but in no sense required. I might add here that some of the rabbis have said that all humanity dies in the death of one who is deliberately sacrificed.

I did not know that Shirley Jackson was publishing "The Lottery" at the very time Mr. Chiaromonte was giving his lecture, but I don't know what this fact proves. Miss Jackson's story is interesting, and is, I am told, much admired by the young. I happen not to be one of those who admire it. The claim has been made that all metaphors are calculated category mistakes. Certainly this is true of some metaphors, and it is true of Miss Jackson's story. The kind of people described by Miss Jackson in "The Lottery" are precisely the kind of people who would under no circumstances hold such a lottery. But in any case neither they, nor the people of England, for that matter, can be said to constitute the whole of humanity.

Trotsky as Jew

To the Editor of Commentary:

At the least a reviewer should be consistent, a quality Joel Carmichael seems to lack in his review of my book, *Trotsky and the Jews* [Books in Review, June]. In his articles on Trotsky (*Encounter*, May, June, 1972), Mr. Carmichael seemed to have arrived at a conclusion similar to my own, for he wrote of Trotsky's ". . . built-in motive for minimizing" his Jewishness, and referred to his ambivalence as an "unavowed, indeed suppressed factor." Moreover, he took Isaac Deutscher to task for this very misapprehension, for, in his (Mr. Carmichael's) words: "In dealing with Trotsky's Jewishness—*in my view, an important factor in his political career*—Deutscher debars himself as it were in advance from making it intelligible" (emphasis added).

In *Trotsky and the Jews* I was trying to fill this gap in Deutscher's trilogy. Unfortunately, . . . Mr. Carmichael, having seen the light only for a short while, is now beating a retreat. But his strictures on my work seem to be unfounded. Indeed, an absolutely complete account of Trotsky's life and career from a Jewish standpoint cannot be written precisely because he did his best to evade his Jewish identity and avoid any appearance of Jewishness. Consequently, we are driven to look at "sidelights" and at situations where he was caught, as it were, unaware in order to deal with his deep-rooted and all-too-conspicuous ambivalence.

Seen in this light, one has no reason to doubt the authenticity of the report of Trotsky's attendance at the famous Zionist Congress of 1903. This was confirmed to me by two independent sources: Marc Jarblum, the Socialist-Zionist representative at the Second International and a friend of Léon Blum, Jaurès, and Vandervelde; and Moshe Novomeysky, the well-known social-revolutionary, Zionist, and industrialist. Similarly, I fully accept as genuine the reminiscences of Nahum Yerushalmi, the Nicolayev-born Zionist, later educator and author in Jerusalem, regarding Trotsky's advice to the Zionist students to follow Jabotinsky's leadership in Jewish self-defense.

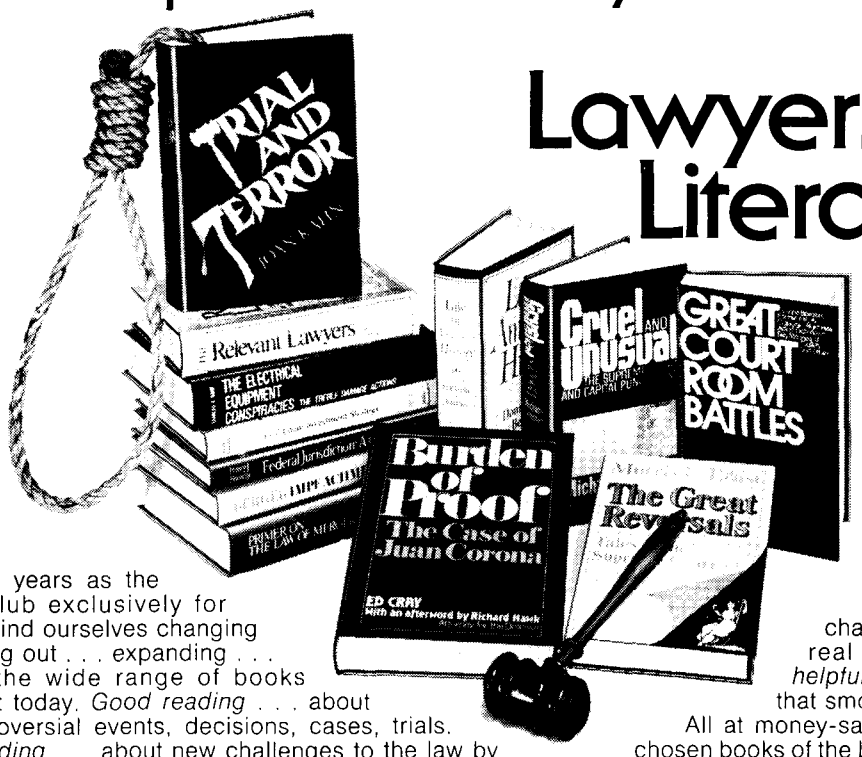
On the other hand, Mr. Carmichael seems to be blind to some of the most obvious facts indicating Trotsky's inability to cast off his Jewish identity and heritage. At the second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic party he fought with the Bund as a self-proclaimed Jew. In 1917 he adamantly refused Lenin's offer of the post of Commissar for Home Affairs for fear of anti-Semitic repercussions; and during the Civil War he urged the Politburo to send more Jews to the front lines with a view to obviating anti-Jewish accusations of "goldbricking."

Mr. Carmichael's charge that I was "disingenuous" in suggesting that Trotsky wrote more about the "Jewish Question" than any other Marxist ideologists, since "the others wrote practically nothing," is, of course, wrong; he is apparently unaware of the fact that Lenin wrote quite extensively on the Jewish problem.

But the gravest shortcoming of Mr. Carmichael's review is its failure to grasp the full significance of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For today's new kind of lawyer... all the important new ways to look at the law.



Lawyers' Literary Club

In our many years as the one book club exclusively for lawyers, we find ourselves changing . . . branching out . . . expanding . . . to include the wide range of books lawyers want today. *Good reading* . . . about recent controversial events, decisions, cases, trials. *Relevant reading* . . . about new challenges to the law by outstanding jurists and constitutional scholars. *Essential reading* . . . on the rapidly changing areas of the law: criminal, real estate, trust, corporate. And *helpful reading* for the professional that smooths the mechanics of the job. All at money-saving discounts, all in the well-chosen books of the Lawyers' Literary Club. We invite you to branch out . . . to grow . . . right along with us.

21370. THE GREAT REVERSALS: Tales of the Supreme Court. *Morris L. Ernst.* Heroic stories, dramatic stories, but always fascinating stories of the many times that the Supreme Court has reversed itself during its 200-year history. "Nothing reveals the Supreme Court so clearly as the way it changes its mind," says the author, and proves it in this important new book. **$7.95**

20290. BURDEN OF PROOF; The Case of Juan Corona. *Ed Cray.* A riveting tale of the Sacramento Valley multiple-murder case involving 25 farm workers. Realistic account of police work and legal strategies are plotted, plus the tense courtroom battle that followed. Compulsive! **$8.95**

24380. TRIAL AND TERROR. *Edited by Joan Kahn.* Twenty-five riveting tales of legal fact and fiction. Witty lawyers, keen English judges, brilliant detectives all pepper this giant collection—the cream of crime and suspense writing—and will keep anyone who relishes the give and take of legal drama hanging to his seat. **$8.95**

20640. CRUEL AND UNUSUAL. *Michael Meltsner.* "A deeply informed and clearly written guide to the recent past of capital punishment litigation. Indispensable to those who would understand the present position."—*Charles L. Black, Jr., Luce Professor of Jurisprudence, Yale Law School.* **$8.95**

21680. THE IMPLOSION CONSPIRACY. *Louis Nizer.* The legendary attorney and master of courtroom suspense recreates the greatest spy story of the century -- the Rosenberg case. **$10.00**

21300. GREAT COURTROOM BATTLES. *Edited by Richard E. Rubenstein.* Emotion charged stories of what happens when talented lawyers clash, fighting for their clients' lives and livelihoods in the most dramatic and significant trials of the last century . . . from Billy Mitchell to Lt. Calley. **$7.95**

21790. JUDGMENTS: Essays on American Constitutional History. *Leonard W. Levy.* Precise and pungent essays on a spectrum of constitutional issues: the influence of judges' temperaments on Supreme Court decisions, the battle over First Amendment freedoms and other rights. **$12.50**

20920. THE ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT CONSPIRACIES. *Charles A. Bane.* What happened when giant corporations (like G.E., Westinghouse, and Allis-Chalmers) were charged with conspiracy to fix prices and rig bids? A lawyer involved in the ensuing litigation gives a blow-by-blow account of the legal maneuvers (both the government's and the corporations'), the federal rulings and relevant statutes. A boon to understanding antitrust law. **$17.50**

21510. A HISTORY OF AMERICAN LAW. *Lawrence M. Friedman.* Shows how, at each stage of history, our politics, economic and social concerns have changed the law. **$14.95**

Take any 3 books

(values as high as $52.50)

all for only $3.95

if you will join now and agree to take only 3 more books—all at handsome discount—over the next 12 months.

(retail prices shown)

73640. REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT STRATEGY. *Maury Seldin and Richard H. Swesnik.* How to make money in building and land. **$10.75**

23590. THE RELEVANT LAWYERS. *Ann Fagan Ginger.* How cases are won that have a tremendous impact on the law. **$9.95**

57660. LANDLORDS AND TENANTS: A Complete Guide to the Residential Rental Relationship. *Jerome G. Rose.* A crystal-clear guide to all the law relevant to tenancy, rent, evictions, public housing, cooperatives and condominiums. Covers new court decisions affecting the landlord-tenant relationship. **$9.75**

21671. IMPEACHMENT: The Constitutional Problems. *Raoul Berger.* One of the year's unexpected bestsellers. A leading authority on impeachment and executive privilege examines the cloudy constitutional issues of impeachment. **$14.95**

21070. FEDERAL JURISDICTION. *Henry J. Friendly, Chief Judge, United States Court of Appeals* / **CRIMINAL SENTENCES.** *Marvin E. Frankel, U.S. District Judge.* A basic, informed guide for taking action on the momentous problems of the explosive growth of the work of Federal courts. *Plus* — a distinguished jurist tells about the sentencing from his side of the bench and points out the way to major reforms on the local, state and federal levels. *The 2 books count as one.* **$15.95**

21700. IN HIS OWN IMAGE. The Supreme Court in Richard Nixon's America. *James Simon.* An inside look at the transition from the Warren to the Burger Court under Nixon's political influence, all served up in highly readable style and a lot of telling glimpses of the personalities and conflicts on the "new" court. **$7.95**

20601. THE CRIMINAL LAW REVOLUTION AND ITS AFTERMATH. *The Editors of Criminal Law Reporter.* A quick-reference commentary and case-by-case review of over 400 sweeping changes and far-reaching decisions since Mapp V. Ohio, 12 years ago. Latest rulings on all aspects of criminal law: right to counsel, habeas corpus, self-incrimination, etc. **$10.00**

70260. PRIMER ON THE LAW OF MERGERS. *Earl W. Kintner.* An expert distillation of the maze of cases, rules and guidelines for anyone affected by the new "merger wave." **$12.95**

48551. FINDING FACTS FAST. *Alden Todd.* The research techniques that are fastest as well as best and most thorough. A book of methods, not facts, for the professions where "time is money." **$5.95**

20140. THE ATTORNEY'S MASTER GUIDE FOR SUCCESSFUL INVESTING. *Charles H. White.* First investment handbook geared particularly to the needs of lawyers. *Counts as 2 of your 3 books.* **$35.00**

22190. LAW IN AMERICAN HISTORY. *Edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn.* A distinguished collection of essays that reveal the role law has played in shaping our culture. **$12.50**

20541. CORPORATE LAW DEPARTMENT PRACTICE. *Harold Vogel.* Steps in budget preparation and control . . . steps in preparing for, and handling, a government investigation and much more. **$12.95**

41650. DATABANKS IN A FREE SOCIETY. *Alan F. Westin and Michael A. Baker.* The first in-depth study of the impact of computers on the constitutional rights of privacy and due process. **$12.50**

20210. BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT. *Sandor Frankel.* The true story of the "Carwash Murder Case," which not only has the excitement of a whodunit, but the most realistic examinations in years of how lawyers and police work. **$7.95**

55580. INSTANT ELOQUENCE. *James C. Humes.* The eloquent solution to finding the time to write a speech for podium or courtroom. A vast sourcebook of material that shows how to open your speech, plan your message, wind up with a dramatic finish. **$6.95**

If card is missing, write:
Lawyers' Literary Club
Dept. 9-32R, Riverside, N.J. 08075
and indicate 3 books you want.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Trotsky's ambivalence while standing at the Jewish ideological crossroads. Winston Churchill seized the horns of the dilemma in his famous article (in the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, London, February 8, 1920), in which he suggested that Trotsky had been the epitome of the crucial historic confrontation between Zionism and Communism. The one thing one cannot say of Trotsky, as Mr. Carmichael does, is that whatever he wrote of Jewishness was "banal and predictable." In 1938 Trotsky predicted the Holocaust and expressed his fear of the physical annihilation of seven million Jews in Europe. A year earlier he admitted the need for a "territorial" solution to the Jewish problem. These are far-reaching views. To be sure, in subscribing indirectly to the Zionist solution, it did not follow that Trotsky himself would have become a pilgrim to Zion: Zionism dawned on him too late in the day for that, but I am convinced that had Stalin spared him another eight years of life to witness the establishment of the State of Israel, Trotsky would have sanctioned this historic fact, even if only as a "temporary" solution to the Jewish problem until the Communist "millennium" was finally ushered in. In this respect, Mrs. Beba Idelson's interview with Trotsky in 1937, which I cite in my book, is very illuminating.

Deutscher's attempt to explain away the inherent ambivalence of Jewish Marxists by adopting a hollow quibble—"the non-Jewish Jew"—falls flat in the light of Trotsky's career. But Mr. Carmichael seems to have fallen into Deutscher's trap. He, too, fails to realize that Jewish history has its own rules as to whether or not to accept a person's renunciation of his Jewishness. A man of such gigantic stature as Trotsky could not just proclaim himself as having been cut off from the Jewish people, and Jewish history has finally caught up with him. Not to understand this is to fail to delve into the inner workings of Trotsky's soul.

JOSEPH NEDAVA
Haifa University
Haifa, Israel

JOEL CARMICHAEL writes:

I'm very sorry that Joseph Nedava is so annoyed with me for criticisms of his *Trotsky and the Jews* that I regard as negligible. I feel all the more apologetic since I subscribe wholeheartedly to his central thesis—that Trotsky suffered, as Mr. Nedava says, from a "deep-rooted . . . ambivalence." Indeed, I regard that ambivalence, united with his flawed character as a whole, as explaining the crucial episodes in Trotsky's career, notably his being eliminated with such ease from the Bolshevik party during the early 20's. I thought my review had made it clear that it was not the *fact* of Trotsky's preoccupation, in his own way, with the "Jewish problem," that was at issue but the problems inherent in any attempt to document it. As Mr. Nedava himself agrees: a "complete account of Trotsky's life . . . from a Jewish standpoint cannot be written" . . . because, of course, he avoided the whole subject. That is all I mean—there is not much actually to *say* about something that is quite obvious.

One is bound to accept Jarblum's and Novomeysky's word for Trotsky's presence at the 1903 Zionist Congress. But what does it mean? No one else mentions it; neither source reports a word Trotsky said; most telling of all, Trotsky's violent attack on Herzl and the Zionists ("adventurers," etc.) is so shallow, so banally "Marxist," in a bad sense, that it is hard to imagine Trotsky's having been in close contact with flesh-and-blood Jews. So if his presence at the Congress is a fact, it is one that tells us precisely nothing.

Yerushalmi does not merely report Trotsky's advice to the Zionist students, as Mr. Nedava mentions, he offers some plainly foolish "reminiscences" about Trotsky, "leader of the Social-Democratic party," "conducting revolutionary activities throughout the Ukraine" from an "apartment" [*sic*] in Kiev. He does not, in short, tell us much.

Though Trotsky fought the Bund at the 1903 Social Democratic Congress as a Jew, he plainly did so in order to heighten the effectiveness of his attack. It was at this time, after all, that in an argument with Vladimir Medem he made his celebrated remark about being "neither a Russian nor a Jew, but a Social Democrat!"

When one considers the range of both Lenin's and Trotsky's writings, it would seem obvious that the "Jewish Question" was the smallest of their concerns, at least—in Trotsky's case—explicitly. Nor is this surprising; all classical Marxism has to tell us is that the Jews, having survived for discreditable reasons, should finally toss in the sponge and vanish.

Surely Mr. Nedava is mistaken in calling a "territorial" solution of the "Jewish problem" a form of Zionism: when Trotsky was forced to accept a territorial solution, after decades of denigrating Zionism, he did not become a Zionist even theoretically: he was reverting to a Bundist notion; and he had simply made one more of his countless mispredictions.

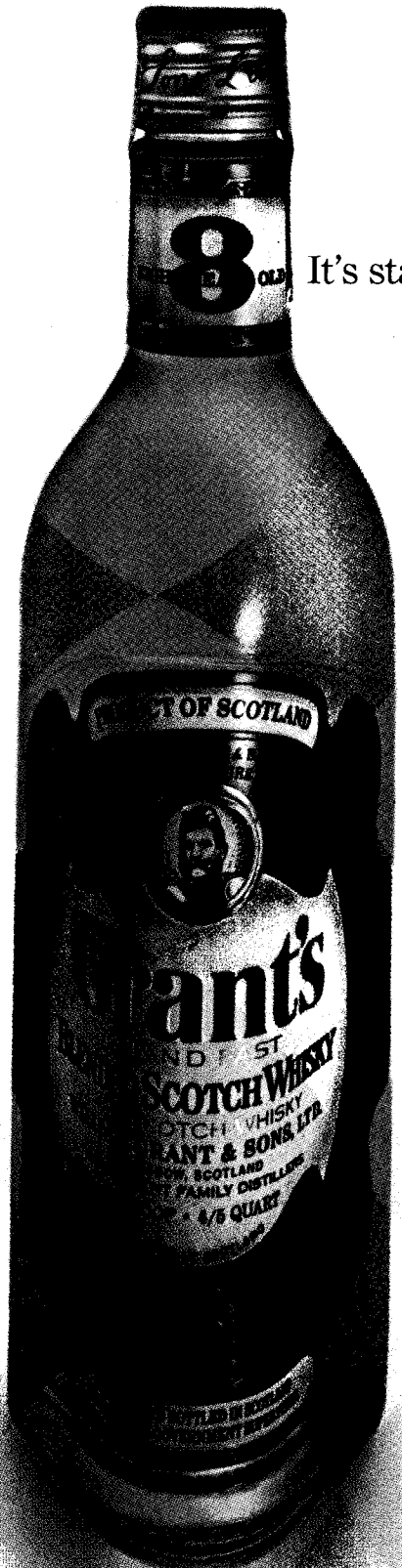
I don't think I understand Mr. Nedava's remark about my "fall[ing] into Deutscher's trap." Deutscher, on this question as on all other crucial questions, was simply dishonest—dishonest in the service of his own "universalizing" Marxist tendency. If Trotsky was a *yeshiva bocher* writ large, Deutscher was one writ small. He systematically distorted Trotsky's Jewishness in the service of the same tendency. I, on the other hand, accept Trotsky's Jewishness completely, entirely in accord with Mr. Nedava. The very fact that Mr. Nedava, whose knowledge of the background seems encyclopedic, cannot adduce more "ev-

This winter, enjoy a Grand Hotel at Sea
on Caribbean luxury cruises from New York on the elegant
S/S OCEANIC
39,241 tons

Her elegant atmosphere, with a gracious all-Italian crew renowned for dedicated service and uncompromising quality, recalls the good life of the Grand Hotels of a past era. Famous Magrodome retractable roof over indoor/outdoor Lido pool deck. Superb activities include 4 orchestras, continental revues, variety shows, movies, sponsored bridge games, ship and shore golf, financial lectures. Acclaimed Home Lines cuisine. All cabins have private bathrooms, phones, stereo music, climate controls. 7 winter cruises of 11 to 16 days, from Dec. 21, 1973 to Mar. 11, 1974. Panamanian Registry.
BOOK THRU YOUR TRAVEL AGENT
HOME LINES
One World Trade Center, Suite 3969
New York, N.Y. 10048 • (212) 432-1414

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Grant's 8® is proud of its age.



It's stated on the label.

Every drop of Grant's 8 scotch is eight years old.

Blended Scotch Whisky 86 Proof, ©1973 William Grant & Sons, Inc., N.Y. Importers. Bottled in Scotland.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

idence" for that Jewishness confirms, I think, the point I made in my review.

Last Tango

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I believe that William S. Pechter ["Deep Tango," July] has missed the step in the tango. The meaning of the sensation caused by *Last Tango in Paris* is not "we want pornography," as he claims; rather, the excitement generated by the movie is caused by its depiction of ideas whose roots in art and literature reach back to Greek mythology: the archetypal tragedy of Man destroyed by Woman. . . . So, in *Last Tango*, Paul, although completely dominating Jeanne in the beginning, is predestined to be vanquished by her in the end. . . .

JANICE D. MADOFF
Newton Centre, Massachusetts

No matter how close you feel to Israel, it is still very far away.

Rest awhile in Europe.

On any Lufthansa flight between the U.S. and Tel Aviv, you can stop off in Cologne, Frankfurt or Munich. At no extra fare. Whether you're flying normal economy or first class. It's a good way to break up a long journey to shop, take care of business or just see the sights.

Lufthansa has fast and frequent service to Tel Aviv. And if you wish fine kosher food en route, simply tell us when you make your reservations.

For reservations to Tel Aviv or any other Lufthansa destination on six continents call your travel agent or Lufthansa.

Lufthansa German Airlines

680 Fifth Avenue, 52 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019
Telephone: (212) 357-8400

Israel, Zionism & Masada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to comment on Shlomo Avineri's "Rethinking Israel's Position" [June] in which he discusses my book, *Israel and the Crisis of Western Civilization.* (The book, incidentally, which was published in Hebrew by Schocken in 1972, will be issued in an English edition by the Jewish Publication Society of America next year.) Mr. Avineri, whose moral and political philosophy is very different from mine, is entitled to disagree with my views, but I feel he has evaded his critical responsibility in his use of vague, pejorative phrases such as "quasi-mystical," "grandiloquent," etc. Let me cite some concrete examples of his errors both of fact and of judgment.

Mr. Avineri states: "Livneh is basically a secular, rationalist intellectual nurtured in the Russian-Jewish radical tradition." But in saying this he seems to have missed the essence of my book, which was written in a spirit of belief far removed from any secular tradition, including that of Russian-Jewish radicalism. Nowhere in the book do I say that "the Jewish people . . . burst upon history as a full-fledged civilization," but, following Yehezkel Kaufmann, I describe Jewish monotheism as "an eruption . . . without roots in the surrounding world"—quite a different proposition.

Nor do I offer the view that the "Jews have throughout the millennia pursued a separate and self-contained history." How could I believe this of a people whose land lies at the crossroads of warring continents and whose history in the Diaspora brought them in contact with hundreds of different lands and peoples?

I mention several times the immense Jewish sensitivity to non-Jewish civilizations ("the ways of the Gentiles"), and the recurrent necessity for Jews to reject the attractions of the non-Jewish world which, if indulged in, would destroy the moral fiber of the people of Israel. The sages of the Talmud performed this task when Israel was faced with the seductions of the late Hellenistic period. I make this point in the book also with reference to our own time and to contemporary Israeli society.

I do not describe current Israeli society as "an island of virtue

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How the war was lost but the wine was won

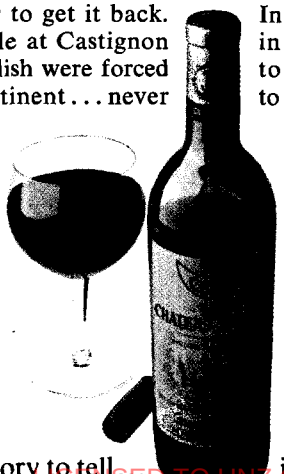
Long, long ago, when knights were bold and kingdoms were personal property, a 15-year-old girl named Eleanor was married to Louis VII, King of France. What she lacked in maturity she made up in her dowry. She was heiress to Aquitaine, an area equal to almost one-quarter of modern France. But even that didn't help, and the marriage was dissolved by the Pope in 1152.

Because she retained her property, Eleanor was very popular and she soon accepted the proposal of Henri Plantaganet, Duke of Anjou. Being a Plantaganet and a descendant of William the Conqueror, it came to pass that Henri became Henry II, King of England.

So, Eleanor, who had been Queen of France at 15, found herself Queen of England at 30. This marriage was successful to the tune of ten children, two of whom became kings. One was Richard the Lion Hearted, of Crusader fame. The other was King John and his best claim to fame was that he was forced to sign the Magna Carta.

Meanwhile, the proud French resented having so large a part of their country being held as personal property of a Queen of England. Especially since Eleanor's lands included the thriving seaport of Bordeaux and all the Bordeaux wine region as well.

Finally, after mulling it over for 100 years, the French started the Hundred Years War to get it back. In a last great battle at Castignon in 1453, the English were forced to leave the Continent . . . never to return.



But, all was not lost.

Before the English evacuated Bordeaux, they made sure they "liberated" all the fine wines maturing in the casks at Chateau D'Issan.

Today, the Chateau is occupied by the Cruse family. And the velvety red wine that bears their name is still worth fighting for. It is a unique wine, made from grapes that grow well in the gravelly soil dating back to a stone age river bed.

Most of the Cruse wines, including the superb Chateau D'Issan, are available in America.

And, as the English found out in 1453, they travel very well.

Every Cruse wine has its own story to tell . . . it begins when you open the bottle.

Cruse

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jacques Lipchitz was the last survivor of the grand avant-garde of modern art, the last link with the heroic cubist period of the School of Paris. A friend of Picasso, Braque, Modigliani, and Le Corbusier, his death in May of this year at the age of 82 brought to a close the era in which they effectively revised the twentieth-century image.

Yet if Jacques Lipchitz was one of the first to apply the principles of cubist form to sculpture—and if, as he said of himself, he was "always a cubist"—it is in another sense that he finally commanded international attention. Cubism had always been an art of heroic form rather than of heroic themes. Lipchitz, turning his attention to the grand subjects of mythology and the Bible, forged a style that could accommodate such material. In some ways he ceased to be a modern artist. Working within an emotional climate that recalled the great efforts of Michelangelo and Rodin, he created monumental works that transcended our own time. In so doing he set aside his youthful experiments in favor of an art that would be capable of sustaining his own mature passion and eloquence.

The central figure of Jacques Lipchitz' mythology was Prometheus—who stole fire from the gods and brought it to mankind. Zeus punished Prometheus by chaining him to Mt. Caucasus, where a vulture fed upon his liver until Heracles—with the consent of Zeus—interceded and set him free. For Lipchitz, Prometheus symbolized the triumph of light over darkness, of education over ignorance, of the effective struggle for liberation in the face of arbitrary punishment and hardship. His interest in the figure apparently traces to 1931; but, with the Hitlerian threat of 1933, Prometheus took on new significance for him. By 1936, the Prometheus he created for the Paris World's Fair was not only chainless but had triumphed over the vulture.

It is this triumphant vision of Prometheus—with the Menorah held high—that Lipchitz chose in his last year to express Israel's determined battle for survival and freedom.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A very special offer extended to readers of

Commentary

An opportunity to acquire a signed and numbered proof of

Jacques Lipchitz'

THE STRUGGLE

a sterling silver salver issued in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the State of Israel

THE STRUGGLE was created by Jacques Lipchitz especially for the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the State of Israel. The Israel Museum, which commissioned the work, houses an incomparable collection of the sculptor's maquettes. Jacques Lipchitz, aged 82 when a Museum representative proposed the project to him in June 1972, promptly offered the original art and his royalties to the Museum.

THE STRUGGLE is issued in a limited edition of 10,000 proofs. At 11⅓ inches in diameter, the salver is the largest of its kind ever issued. Twenty-five ounces of sterling silver symbolize the twenty-five years of Israel's freedom, but the full weight is augmented by a solid base.

Each salver is signed by the artist on both the obverse and the reverse. The reverse also bears the signature of the distinguished art scholar Willem Sandberg, who served as advisor to the Israel Museum. Each salver is numbered and is accompanied by a correspondingly numbered certificate of authenticity which bears a date and an explanation of the significance of the date in Jewish history. The salvers were struck at the Atelier of the Medallic Art Company.

Commentary, 165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y., 10022

I enclose my check for $350 in payment for one sterling silver proof of THE STRUGGLE mounted on a solid bronze base.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standing outside of and apart from the decadent civilization of the West," but I do stress its vulnerability to Western influences: "The young generation is open to winds blowing from the outside world—libertinism, commercialized pornography, pop art"; "nothing is yet decided, everything is in the balance . . . the dangers are immense. . . . The State of Israel will not survive if it discontinues the civilization of Israel. . . . Israeli society will disintegrate and the state will collapse under external pressure." Perhaps the West can survive these trends of disintegration and degeneration, but they are deadly to Israel.

Mr. Avineri further states that, "according to Livneh, Western culture means 'the pursuit of pleasure and the attachment to the passing moment, the worship of material abundance, sexual exhibitionism and total permissiveness, the sprawling megalopolis and alienation from humanity and from the Creation.'" This, of course, is utter nonsense. The passage he cites deals with present trends in Western society. I do not share what is termed by Mr. Avineri "Spenglerian heights." Spengler's views are discussed and rejected both on historical and methodological grounds. The chapter in the book concerned with the West is not called "Decline" but "The End of the New Era."

I do not believe Israel is "self-contained," but I see it as a civilization different from that of the West (which is not universal), and therefore not necessarily bound up with Western development. Judaism escaped the disruption and collapse of the ancient West, after the decline of the Roman Empire. The fall of the Roman Empire did not have the same meaning for Israel as it had for the peoples of Europe. The centuries corresponding to the European Dark Ages (5th-10th) were full of creativity and progress in Jewish life. Surely "the historical cycle of dispersion and return is an exclusive Jewish phenomenon," and so are the different stages of the dispersion.

The modern Return to Zion in the 18th century—whose current phase is called Zionism—is essentially a link in the chain of the unique Jewish historical cycle. The Return started early in the 18th century in the wake of internal stress and disintegration in the creative and autonomous Jewish community in the dispersion. A growing number of Jews—both in Europe and in the Ottoman domains—were losing the will and the patience to live the confined existence of the *galut*, without either the wholeness of Jewish life in the Land of Israel or the attractions of a full-fledged Gentile political society. The Sabbatean movement—almost universal in its spread throughout the Diaspora—was a token and an alarm. Two developments emerged out of this Jewish crisis: in one direction, acculturation-assimilation-emancipation, and the Return to the Land of Israel in the other. In the beginning, the first trend was immeasurably larger; the second trend (starting with the *aliyah* of Rabbi Yehuda he-Hasid in 1700) was a mere trickle. The first culminated in the European Holocaust; the second grew and developed into 19th-century Zionism. Both are historically and sociologically quite different from European nationalism and cannot be understood without an understanding of their dialectical interdependence. The deep and shattering disillusionment with emancipation on the part of acculturated Jews turned into a basic impulse toward Zionism. Acculturation was a breaking away from creative Jewish tradition; Zionism in turn was a breaking away from acculturation. Secular Zionism, however deeply influenced by the European experience (nationalism, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust), is but one phase in the process of physical return (*shiva*) toward spiritual realization (*teshuva*). The beginning of the modern Jewish return to the Land of Israel preceded European national movements and cannot "be seen as a specific form of modern nationalism," as Mr. Avineri seems to assume.

My critic informs American readers that "Herzl, Pinsker, Borochov, and other early Zionist thinkers are hardly mentioned in the book, while scores of obscure rabbinical pronouncements on the Return to Zion are cited frequently." In fact, all those Zionist thinkers are mentioned repeatedly, and Pinsker is quoted at greater length than any modern Jewish personality. Neither the rabbis cited nor their pronouncements are obscure. Indeed, they are as "obscure" as Thomas à Kempis, John Knox, or Ulrich Zwingli for educated Christians. Why should a distinguished Jewish intellectual be unaware of his own tradition, even if he does not follow it? . . . I wonder at the gloomy political predictions of Mr. Avineri. . . . Why should the traditional Jewish conception about the uniqueness of Israel prevent "realistic chances of peace in the Middle East"? Since the beginning of the Zionist Return there has never been more real peace in the Land of Israel—for Jews and Arabs alike—than there is today. . . . Though surely not perfect, this is not an inconsiderable achievement. And let us not forget that the perfect has always been the worst enemy of the possible. . . .*

ELIEZER LIVNEH

Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I wonder whether Shlomo Avineri is right in claiming that the usual English translation of *Eretz Yisrael ha-Shlema* as "Greater Israel" is not entirely objective. "Great" is used here not as in "Moses was a great man" but as in "Greater New York," "Greater London," etc.

RHODA GOLD

Bayside, New York

SHLOMO AVINERI writes:

What Eliezer Livneh and I basically differ on is our understanding of the nature of Zionism. I see it as a secular, modern, national movement which would *have been inconceivable without* the impact of the European Enlightenment and Western nationalism on the Jewish community. It obviously drew on the Jewish religious heritage, just as Greek nationalism drew on Greek Orthodox Christianity, Irish and Polish nationalism on Catholicism, and Arab nationalism on Islam. But both in its ideology, and in the social composition of its early thinkers and practitioners, Zionism was and is a secular movement.

Mr. Livneh, on the other hand, sees Zionism basically within the framework of a religious metaphysics whose premises are slightly fuzzy when they come from a person of his intellectual background. I made it clear in my article that it would never occur to me to deny that the rabbinic tradition was instrumental in keeping Jewish yearning for the land of Israel alive over 2,000 years. But it was basically a passive tradition, and it wasn't the rabbis, but those who

* This letter, and Shlomo Avineri's reply (below), were written before the outbreak of hostilities in October.—ED.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sweet Unsalted Mazola® Margarine. The Fresh Taste.

The fresh taste.
Sweet Unsalted Mazola Margarine is just what it says: unsalted and sweet. It tastes like fresh-churned butter. Does your margarine?

Better for cooking.
Sweet Unsalted Mazola has a lot more to offer besides good taste. For one thing, unlike butter and most other margarines, it won't burn at normal frying temperatures of 300° to 350°.

Low in saturated fats.
And no cholesterol at all.
Many heart specialists urge us to limit the saturated fats and cholesterol in our diets, and to substitute foods high in polyunsaturates. Because it contains pure golden corn oil, Sweet Unsalted Mazola fills the bill. It's low in saturated fats, high in polyunsaturates, and it has no cholesterol at all.

Kosher and Parve.
Sweet Unsalted Mazola Margarine not only tastes good, and cooks without burning, it makes good sense. You get the light, fresh taste of sweet country butter. Plus the well-known benefits of good golden corn oil. Low saturated fats, high polyunsaturates, and no cholesterol at all. And, naturally, Sweet Unsalted Mazola is Kosher and Parve. The fresh taste. Where has it been all your life?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rebelled against the rabbis who developed an active political ideology of immigrating to Palestine and establishing a secular Jewish national commonwealth there. If it hadn't been for this secular rebellion against the religious tradition, the rabbis would have continued to say "Next year in Jerusalem," just like so many millions of Diaspora Jews today; though they may believe in the ultimate messianic redemption, they continue, like their ancestors, to reside in exile, although an affluent exile. That there were individual rabbis who left their homes and went to Israel is obviously true, but they were the exception. The building of *Eretz Yisrael* occurred toward the end of the 19th century as a result of the secular impetus which fought the traditional rabbinic passivism and *de facto* accommodation with the *galut*. I hope no one will be offended, but the religious Jewish belief in the ultimate Return to Zion, is, in historical terms, on a par with the Christian chiliastic belief in the Second Coming of Christ. Both beliefs were deeply held, but neither one moved many people to change their way of life. If the rabbinic belief in the Return to Zion had been effective, the Jewish population of Palestine would not have been so sparse before the late 19th century.

The paradox in Mr. Livneh's position is that it looks almost like a caricature of the Arab propaganda portraying Zionism as a religious, theocratic movement.

Since Mr. Livneh's book will soon be available in English, I shall refrain from a battle of quotations with him. The English-speaking reader will soon be able to see for himself whether I misrepresented his opinions. But there is one case where it might be of general intellectual interest to point out that Mr. Livneh is somewhat hesitant in sticking to his guns.

He suggests that "nowhere in the book" does he offer the view that "the Jewish people . . . burst upon history as a full-fledged civilization." But Chapter II, characteristically called "The Uniqueness of Israel," begins as follows (my translation and my emphasis):

> One cannot understand the history of the Jewish people in the last generation . . . without identifying its source—the uniqueness of the people of Israel. The Jewish people is not a people belonging to one of the great civilizations—the Christian-humanist, the Buddhist, the Hindu, and the Muslim—*but is a human phenomenon unto itself. The Jewish people determines its own modes of confrontation with its natural and human environment,* and demands a special way of life from its sons and daughters. . . .
>
> When did this outburst called Israel occur? What is the nature of its beginning? . . . What is its history? Just as its beginning is unique, so its cycles of history are different from those of any other people. *The people of Israel did not appear on the stage of history through slow evolution out of the depths of prehistory, out of a primitive, barbarian reality.* It burst on the apex of ancient Oriental society at the highlight of its development. . . .

Reading this one may also understand why I feel such views present a danger to realistic chances of peace in the Middle East, a position Mr. Livneh cannot comprehend. The reason is simple: if we wish to achieve peace, blasting away on Jehovah's trumpets isn't going to be a bit helpful. Since Mr. Livneh denies that the Wesern—or universal—periodization of history is relevant to Israel, it is useless to point out to him that an ideology fit for Joshua's conquest of Canaan is out of date in the 20th century. For Mr. Livneh the essence of the people of Israel remains unchanged throughout the generations, the movements of history do not engulf Israel: history is for the *goyim,* while the Jews live outside of time, in a blissful ethereal sphere in which all historical developments are nothing but so many external *klipot* (husks) that will fall off sooner or later.

The reasons for the absence of peace in the Middle East are deeply rooted in the Arab refusal to accept Israel's reality and legitimacy. If there is ever a chance for peace, it will not be based on Mr. Livneh's claim of Jewish uniqueness but on a mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs that our two national movements, each unique in its own way, will have to respect each other and recognize the common human denominator in both of them. This will, of course, become feasible only if Arab Palestinian nationalism will abjure its murderous terrorism; as long as this does not occur, the chances for peace are very dim indeed. But peace will also require, on Israel's part, an attachment to universalist values and not to the New Ghetto, of which Mr. Livneh is such an eloquent prophet.

Rhoda Gold is mistaken in her belief that the connotation of "Greater Israel" is analogous to that of "Greater New York." For those with more relevant historical associations, it recalls, alas, the Greater German Reich. The false translation, initially introduced by pro-Arab journalists in 1967, was maliciously slanted with that analogy in mind. Interpretations and historical associations aside, the standard dictionary translation of *shlema* is "entire" or "complete," and not "greater" or "great." So let's stick to plain language.

To the Editor of Commentary:

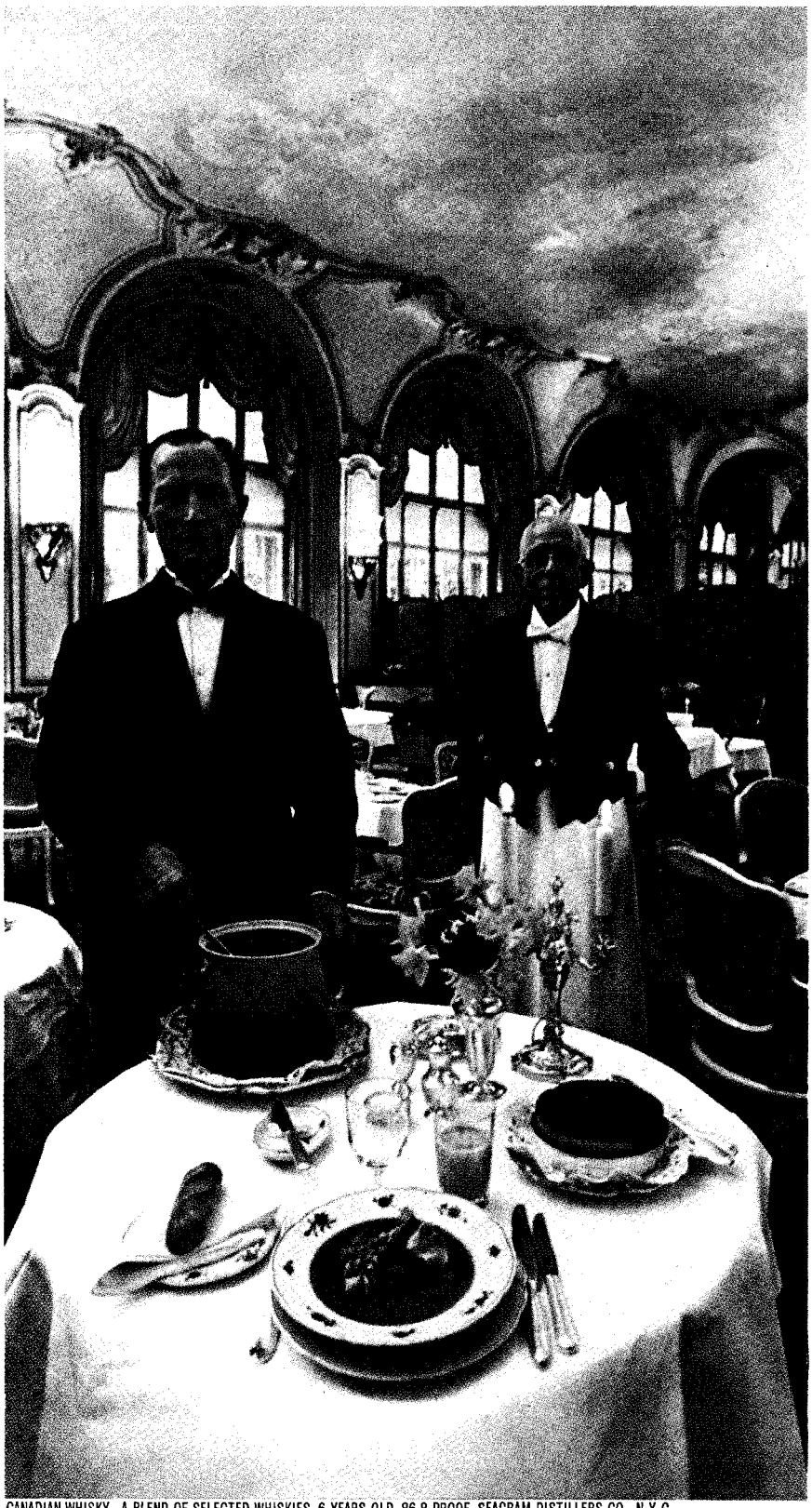
I read Robert Alter's article, "The Masada Complex" [July], with great interest, and I recalled that Chaim Weizmann had delivered a speech on the same subject . . . in December 1946:

> We came to Palestine to build, not to destroy; terror distorts the essence of Zionism. It insults our history; it mocks the ideals for which a Jewish society must stand; it sullies our banner; it compromises our appeal to the world's liberal conscience. It is futile to invoke the national struggles of other nations as examples for ourselves. Not only are the circumstances different, but our purposes, too, are unique. Each people must apply its own standards to its conduct, and we are left with the task of weighing our actions in the scales of Jewish tradition.
>
> Nor must our judgment be dazzled by the glare of self-conscious heroism. Masada, for all its heroism, was a disaster in our history. It is not our purpose or our right to plunge to destruction in order to bequeath a legend of martyrdom to posterity.
>
> Zionism was to mark the end of our glorious deaths and the beginning of a new path leading to life. Against the "heroics" of suicidal violence I urge the courage of endurance, the heroism of superhuman restraint. I admit that it requires stronger characters, more virile nerves, than are needed for acts of violence. Whether they can rise to that genuine courage, above the moral degradation of terrorism, is the challenge which history issues to our youth.

Meyer W. Weisgal
The Weizmann Institute
Rehovot, Israel

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Only The Ritz is The Ritz. Only V.O. is V.O.



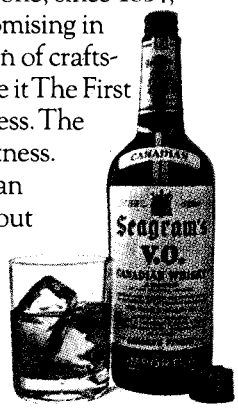
"There is only one Ritz..." Ernest Hemingway once remarked, "And that is the Paris Ritz." And so indeed, the Paris Ritz has reigned, since 1898, as the Queen Mother of all the world's great hotels.

Through its entrance on the magnificent Place Vendôme, have passed Kings and Queens, courtiers and diplomats, artists and movie stars—they have all come, again and again, seeking the same simple elixirs. Serenity. Privacy. Ambiance. And a standard of service unequalled anywhere on earth.

Beginning with Escoffier, the Ritz has employed only five chefs de cuisine in more than seventy years. Its chief sommelier has watched over his wine cellars for three generations. Waiters, trained in the art of table watching, appear magically to refill wine glasses or light cigars with foot-long matches.

And through the years, only The Ritz is The Ritz. A quiet, timeless island of Old World grace and civility. A one-of-a-kind creation.

Like The Ritz, Seagram's V.O. Canadian is also a one-of-a-kind creation; another quiet reminder of Old World grace and civility. It too stands alone, since 1857, as a whisky uncompromising in quality, with a tradition of craftsmanship that has made it The First Canadian in smoothness. The First Canadian in lightness. And The First Canadian in popularity throughout the world.



Only The Ritz is The Ritz. Only V.O. is V.O. All the others come after.

Seagram's V.O. The First Canadian.

CANADIAN WHISKY—A BLEND OF SELECTED WHISKIES. 6 YEARS OLD. 86.8 PROOF. SEAGRAM DISTILLERS CO., N.Y.C.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

©1973

THE NOILLY PRAT MARTINI

A great martini is not made by gin alone.

For great martinis, you need more than just a particularly good gin. You need a particularly good vermouth, too. And since Noilly Prat invented dry vermouth in 1813 we know what makes it good. We know that the longer dry vermouth is aged, the better it is. That's why Noilly Prat is aged longer And that's why it's the best vermouth for martinis. You've gone to the trouble of finding a really good gin. Are you going to put just any vermouth into it?

DON'T STIR WITHOUT NOILLY PRAT

French Extra Dry Vermouth

For the Noilly Prat Martini plus 17 other drink and gourmet recipes, write Noilly Prat, The Jos. Garneau Co., 555 Madison Avenue, N.Y.C. 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On Soviet Dissidence

An Interior View

Lev Navrozov

"THE West, the West," my guest chimes, looking indolently on. "I *was* in the West."

He likes our country house, he is sitting at his leisure, arm winglike over chair back, to get the good of it, *shedding words.*

Oh, let us shed words
As the garden sheds its amber.

Our spot of timeless serenity is actually only a few miles from an airport where foreign statesmen land, some twenty miles from Moscow; but as one rides from the airport all one sees is forests and we are lost in them somewhere, we are pleasantly invisible.

"I *was* in the West," he sheds words. "I talked with Ezra Pound just as I am talking with you—I dined with Sartre. Nothing special. You exaggerate, really."

He likes our almost extraterritorial seclusion. For myself, I never touch on his Literature: those few people who come to us leave it outside. He is attached to the department of literature in a certain rank: he is a Member of the Board of the Union of Writers. Everyone is attached to some department, because if he is not, he is a Parasite, that is, a criminal, to be exiled to some remote area to work there as a serf-peasant. I am not attached to any department, a circumstance I recall sometimes with the numbness of a criminal too long and too safely immersed in his crime, sometimes with my father's despairing sloth—very Russian. As a Translator of Literature (how metallic is the name of my Profession) I could have become a Member of the Union of Writers many years ago. But I did not. Horribly enough, I did not become even a Trade Union Member at the departments for which I free-lance. Am I then a Parasite? Not far from my country house is the country house (it has less acreage) of a Member of the Politburo or a Candidate Member of the Politburo (I have never been interested in ascertaining which, exactly). Surely Parasites do not live in houses with more acreage than Members (or even Candidate Members) of the Politburo.

I am a statistical exception—a rare event—eluding the departmental mesh. I am not registered at any department because I am not attached to any department. No department can understand how I could have become a member of some department, with all the advantages accruing, but would not. Each department assumes that I belong to another department, evidently very high up, perhaps so high that no one knows what my rank is and who, precisely, knows it.

IN THE 60's it might have seemed that now one could and must voice his dissidence publicly (and yet those who would have done so are now perishing). I myself did not become an active participant because at that time all my spiritual power was going into what had long since become a pastime, or obsession, for me: my writing. I was like a woman with child; I was guarding a life the infinite value of which no one would perhaps ever appreciate but myself. To others these were just manuscripts, quite possibly a maniac's scribblings. I would not argue. No mother would, to explain the infinite value of her child. I just guarded them, with obtuse silence and cunning stubbornness.

A pursuit like mine only became possible after 1953 as it gradually transpired that one could study and write in the privacy of one's home and be safe as long as one did not try to voice any dissidence publicly. Before 1953 this had been impossible, not because one did not want to take the risk, but because sustained intellectual activity is incompatible with constant danger. One can conspire, kill, explode, knowing that if it comes to that one must kill oneself rather than be caught alive. But one cannot engage in sustained intellectual activity knowing every second that one may be caught the next or may have to kill oneself. High sensitivity and alertness and constant suicidal preparedness are compatible with many years of happiness and periods of ecstatic exalta-

LEV NAVROZOV is the author of several works in Russian which are unpublished but which have attracted considerable underground attention in his native country. Born in Moscow in 1928, Mr. Navrozov, who made his living as an English translator of classical Russian literature, left the Soviet Union during the latest wave of Jewish emigration and is now residing in New York; his article, "Getting Out of Russia," appeared in the November 1972 COMMENTARY. The present work, in different form, will be a part of his forthcoming book, *The Education of Lev Navrozov,* to be published early next year by Harper's Magazine Press.

Copyright © 1973 by Lev Navrozov.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion, but certainly not with what we may call study, understanding, description.

The pre-1917 writers who survived into Stalin's 40's were as vulnerable as an old strain of microbes to a new antibiotic. But the new strain born after 1917 had developed immunity: a defense mechanism that included—well, call it paranoia, except that it was like the blinking of the human eye, a universal reflex that has made it possible to survive in the environment in which mankind has been living everywhere for millennia (except in a few places and then mostly in modern times). After 1917 and throughout the Stalinist period in Russia a life-and-death struggle ensued between two paranoias, the paranoia of the pseudo-czar-god himself and the ever more immune paranoia of the human life around him. He defended himself with all the means he knew against that human life, which in turn defended itself with all the means *it* knew and has ever known; and it knows many.

Then, suddenly, in 1953, the pseudo-czar-god was said to have died, or at least he seemed to have vanished no one knows exactly when and how, and in several years it became clear that one could safely write in the privacy of one's room, and into this, the life in me went.

I AM the only strictly private person in the country, as my guest calls me, living on a kind of extraterritorial estate.

"And what is there?" he once asked, pointing at something looming between the trees beyond the invisible fence, running all around our estate.

"Oh, there—" I peered. "Serfdom."

Foreign correspondents stayed the night at my country house after their New Year's party, and nothing happened. My son never joined any Children's Organization, nor did he ever go to school.

"See?" my guest exults. "You are freer than you would have been in America."

"Yes. Except that I can't spare, say, one hundred billion dollars a year to defend my freedom. I just exist in a crevice between departments. This, by the way, is why I get all the books I want from abroad and you don't. The department of literature that watches over you does not watch over me because I am not its responsibility."

I like him for his genuine, that is, self-scrutinizing, sincerity, which is so rare. He would be bringing his newly published book. He knows I will not say a word about it, and he is grateful, but he will just open to the page bearing his picture, and begin to admire it.

A Russian poetess, in one of her poems, addressed her aristocratic seducer thus: "How handsome you are, O devil." Holding the open book in his outstretched hand, raised so that he has to look up in order to gaze at his portrait, the portrait of an elderly man who obviously suffers from a bad liver, he finally says in a languishing whisper: "How handsome you are, O devil."

He always asks apprehensively if I'm expecting anyone else when he comes.

"People are monsters," he explains. "*Monsters.*" Then he adds as a shy afterthought: "I am a monster, too, of course, but at least myself I can abide."

Today he is out of luck. Very carefully I break the news. Yes, "that" man's wife. But she will just drop in on her way to somewhere else and will then go away. She is much too important to stay long.

My guest's rank in Literature is not the highest, and he shuns people either below his rank because they may try to humiliate him (if only to take revenge for their lowliness), or of the same rank because they may be more insolent still (entitled as they are to regard themselves as his equals). But "that" man is younger than he; once his rank in Literature was lower than his; and now it is higher!

"I know that the man is a kind of inflammation inside my brain," he says in one of those flashes of lucidity for which I like him so much. "I am like a clerk in the department of railroads who can only talk about another clerk who has been promoted ahead of him. 'Injustice!' he cries out to the heavens, like Prometheus in a play of Aeschylus. But he forgets that the person hearing him may not himself belong to the department of railroads, and the immensity of the tragic injustice will be lost on him."

He transfers his inflammation to the man's wife. "I know this is stupid," he says. "I picture myself very elegant and ironic, with a carnation in my lapel, saying something really devastating about her husband, but in such a subtle, witty way that everyone is charmed. But it doesn't work."

No, it doesn't. Throughout her visit he will be rather like Prometheus, only reduced to wearing a suit and enacting his inner state in a mute, livid gloom.

Her husband—well, he, on the one hand, is a famous writer. Just like Gogol, Chekhov, or Steinbeck. On the other hand, he is a serf albeit of high rank.

Under Peter I (the early 18th-century big serf-owner, misnamed a czar, that is, a caesar) there were as yet no noblemen in Russia. Noblemen were serfs, only ranked. These ranked serfs were to become attached to various departments. The words *serfdom* and *serfs* mean literally in the Russian language the *right of attachment* and the *attached.*

Her husband is attached to the department of literature.

Private serf-owners in Russia before 1861 owned serf musicians, serf engineers, serf actors, etc., who did not differ outwardly from musicians, engineers, actors, etc. in the West. But serf writers —what purpose would they serve?

In Russian etymologically there is no word *state.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The word translated into English as *state* connotes a master's arrangement, a lord's arrangement, an owner's arrangement (the period 1861 to 1917, when Russia *was* a state, was too brief for the Russian language to develop its new word *state* or to reinterpret completely its old word). The bigger their serf-ownership, the more easily can serf-owners afford the luxury of simulating a state, and of attaching more serfs to activities like literature (what is a state without literature?) and not merely to activities like theater or music, as small serf-owners once did.

The department of literature does not prescribe a uniform. A Writer is to be dressed like Gogol or Chekhov or Steinbeck. This is his uniform: he should look like a Writer. Many such serfs are to look as though they were living in old Russia or in the West, in all seriousness, in freedom. Partly a writer's rank is explicit (like, a Member of the Secretariat of the Union of Writers) but partly it is secret or implicit yet accurate, and as decisive as his position would have been at the court in Russia long before Gogol's day.

"WHY do you want to go away to the West?" the famous writer's wife asks me. My wife must have mentioned to her the topic of the conversation before her arrival.

I would answer if she would listen. But she won't. Either because I am not important enough or she doesn't understand and gets bored. Her husband belongs to a very high rank and his fate will be an individual one, but for the rest of us our fate will be collective. There are, for example, two kinds of perfectly identical pinewood coffins for all of us, the screaming red kind and the imitation oak kind. They are identical everywhere and are sold in identical shops. But if I were to carry on about all this I would sound like a peevish miserable housewife, complaining of scarcities and shortages.

"What do you want to go away to the West for?"

She will listen to not more than ten words on end, or fewer. Her husband has a *very* high rank in Literature. She believes that his rank and his talent correlate, that many others are, indeed, yokels who have been promoted so high in Literature because they serve *those people up there*, while her husband has been promoted for his talent alone. When he is demoted a little, that proves to her that he refuses to sacrifice his talent to curry *their* favor, and when he is promoted still higher that shows her that even *they* have to reckon with his talent.

Still, imperceptible as his demotions are to an untrained eye (no invitation to the Kremlin New Year's party), they depress her terribly, perhaps because as a Russian woman, wise rather than intelligent, she senses how easily everyone may roll suddenly all the way down. Talent or no talent. She was drinking a lot on one such occasion, and when somebody cautioned, "You are getting drunk," she said to me: "It's good, I'll get drunk and untie on you."

To untie on someone means to transcend, to forget the self, dissolve in another and hence be in bliss. Perhaps she meant to do it in heaven where there are no ranks.

Then she began to mope. "Tell me, why won't they put us all in *one* prison camp?"

"I know they will divide us," she said, now weeping in all earnest. "We'll all be in different camps. But what harm would it do them if we were all together?"

She is generous, kind, impulsive, thoughtless, we all love her. Except for my guest, of course. Her face was bloated, like a huge child's only all going to pieces, and we began soothing her by reminding her that actually what she wanted was to leave everything and go to a small town to work as a medical nurse. She had even had a nurse's dress and cap designed for her, which is quite important, for once she wrote from London: "I haven't found a single decent rag here to buy."

But her husband has since been promoted again, the windows are a liturgy of sunshine. To the West? Why do I want to go to the West? I know I cannot count on her attention for more than ten words, and I answer her quickly.

"I want to be buried in a metal casket."

The answer is a huge success: she laughs briefly.

AFTER the visit of the wife of the very successful writer my guest tries to cast off his gloom and regain his word-shedding mood.

Oh, let us shed words
As the garden sheds its amber.

"People are always discontented," he sheds words. "Straining elsewhere. Waiting. *'That's* when we'll begin to live in earnest.' But what a period that was to live in—well, in, say, 1912. The Golden Age. What a flourishing of art."

We invoke the names.

Stravinsky—Blok—Chaliapin—Rachmaninoff—Stanislavsky—Kandinsky—Pasternak—

"My God!" he moans, overwhelmed. "Freedom! *Pravda* appeared legally after 1912—*Pravda!* Think of it. A newspaper published by a group calling openly for the overthrow of the regime could be bought on a newsstand for two kopeks. But no, they would not *live*. 'We are born of Russia's age of horror,' they proclaimed. Age of horror. Well, instead they got the age of joy. With *Lubyankas* all over the country to cheer them up. There is nothing like a large, efficient network of torture chambers for good cheer."

I want to explain to him that the free expression of discontent has nothing to do with the collapse of the social structure, but he does not appreciate my saying that literature is impossible

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

without social knowledge, and will not listen. Like many writers, or Writers, he still assumes that there is a certain irrational unconscious which is very profound, because in German (and in Russian) the word *deep* (in the sense of deep-lying in the stomach, for example) and the word *profound* are the same. The irrational unconscious is very, very deep—perhaps even as deep as the stomach. Sometimes this is assumed to be the same as Russianness, and then the writer says something irrationally unconsciously profoundly Russian (usually a century old); and if his ancestors are unknown, which would make him a *pure* Russian, and yours are known to have been Jews or Tartars or Germans, he will look over your head with the expression of a polite music teacher faced with a tone-deaf student.

He will not listen. So I falter and stop.

"Never mind," he says. "Let us live. Everyone is unhappy. Before 1953 everyone was happy. Then it became safe to be unhappy, and everyone became unhappy. I *am* happy. I now have all the freedom I need: the freedom of thought and the freedom of ecstasy. As long as I think and feel without succumbing to the vanity of publishing what I think and feel, I am safe. At least in Moscow, in this year *anno domini*—"

"Those are not quite freedoms. Rather leniencies. But I agree. The ecstasy of writing without the need to jump up at every rustle. A stack of paper. No fear of search and death, provided you are content just to write—well, for yourself or for posterity. A stack of paper—"

"I *am* happy."

"Also, we have had up to now the freedom of conversation in the privacy of our homes," I go on cataloguing freedoms.

"Well," he says vaguely, to imply that in the privacy of *my* home there is no such leniency because despite my unattached state, my home is certainly bugged in his opinion since I receive foreigners. "We really should go out. For a walk. Man must live for his complexion."

It is just that he has a retentive memory of history: up to the mid-30's those who were not Members of the Party thought they could talk privately quite freely. This was known as Philistine Talk: Philistines were assumed to be too feather-brained to be noticed in this respect. Then suddenly in the mid-30's Philistine Talk began to be sufficient to doom anyone.

"Why are we still alive?" he asks in a superstitious whisper, and then answers. "Khrushchev met Furtseva in the corridor, I mean in 1957, and she warned him that the others wanted to throw him out. Why was he in the corridor? Perhaps he wanted a smoke. A slower rate of nicotine decomposition in someone's blood may seal our doom overnight, and secretly too—may have, indeed, sealed it already, only we don't know it. They have bought Japanese electronic equipment—you know, of course."

The Japanese equipment has recently been a frequent topic of conversation, with elaborate descriptions of devices that allegedly monitor a conversation in a room from outside by recording a beam reflected off the vibrating window glass. That is if the room has not already been bugged from the inside.

"All right," I say. "But listening to our tapes they must be moved, really." Involuntarily, I speak more loudly and distinctly, as though to make a good tape recording. "You yourself complain that people are inclined to think that black is white just because it is beneficial for them to think so, and not because black *is* white. In the freest societies of the 20th century so many people have *thought* they were living in the least free society ever known. Few societies, on the other hand, were as unfree (or evil) as ours between 1937 and 1953, and hardly ever have there been so many people, here and elsewhere, who *thought* that this was the freest (and best) society in human history. When our society was no longer black enough for them to think it dazzling white, while China in the meantime had become perfectly black, some of these same people began to think China perfectly white. At least we, whether under Nicholas the Third, Shih Huang Ti, or Vaska the Skew-Eyed, will always *think* that in the 60's there existed the leniency just to live, to think, to write in the privacy of one's home, whereas there had been no such leniency before 1953. Are there many people who will *think* this, no matter what their 'motivational' circumstances may be?"

This reassures and inspires him.

"O God," he says, his big hand thumping his chest, and I recall that his father was a fervent Orthodox churchgoer in his youth, so that the gesture is perhaps quite natural. The Russian "O God" has three syllables, the Slavic vocative case, and he blows out the first syllable with such subtle naturalness that it seems he was brought up in his father's faith since childhood, his big light eyes gazing heavenward or toward an imaginary microphone (still usually considered to be located in the ceiling). "O God, thank Thee for having enlightened them so that they do not unleash the plague upon us but still let us live in the privacy of our homes. What am I compared with their omnipotence?"

He lowers his voice to a whisper—partly as a conversational technique suggesting the tragic, partly to avoid at least some of the new Japanese equipment.

"They have squelched Czechoslovakia. As my boot would . . . a ladybug. Nothing new, of course. People simply have no memory. Georgia was reconquered in 1921 in exactly the same way. 'The working people of Georgia have applied for our aid.' See? In forty-seven years they did not even bother to think up a new cliché. Nothing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

new has happened since 1921, or perhaps 1922. Everything was clear by 1922. And yet we thought: Czechoslovakia—the oldest university in Central Europe. Nothing happened. Even your pet Anglo-Saxons would not act lest it endanger their trade. And what am I compared with the ladybug of Czechoslovakia? A *microbe.*"

He contemplates the enormous, infinite forces ranged against his microscopic size.

"O God, how can I thank Thee enough?" he exclaims, reaching the point where hysteria and irony, imagination and reality, fear and ridicule begin to blend as in the Stanislavsky method. "They allow me, a microbe, to live free of the fear that I may perish at the whim of some junior clerk of the local torture chamber. And that freedom from that fear means the freedom of ecstasy and thought. Have I deserved so much? Would I have been good enough to grant the same freedom to *them,* had *they* been—no, not even crawling infinitesimally at my omnipotent feet, but existing invisibly in a test tube clutched in my cold, *scientific* hand?"

THROUGHOUT the 60's he was worried that some of those who dared to express their dissidence openly after the mid-50's would draw him finally into some act that would displease the authorities: he would have to sign some petition requesting the release of someone imprisoned for dissidence, and thereby he would become an open dissident himself, also finally to be imprisoned. Yet if he had refused from the start to sign anything at all, he might have earned the reputation of a coward, a lick-spittle, a careerist.

He tried for a while to put them off with jokes. "Look, right now I cannot challenge a nuclear power to an all-out fight because my liver is out of order." Another *mot* of his: "Nietzsche said, 'To be a hero one must have a heroic stomach.' Does anyone know of a stomach so heroic as to brave *our* prisons?" Or: "The regime at least still lets me be at my home. Now, if you boys could defend me against the tyranny of my family. . . ." To me he complains:

"These microbes believe that the microbiologist lets them be because they are too brave and noble and dedicated to be killed. They think they are fighting him by trying to displease him. Finally, it will end up as in the 30's. We must value the microbiologist's leniency—he is not obliged to be lenient if he can destroy us like microbes."

"Well, with all these new advances in the science of surveillance, there's no need to drag us somewhere if they can watch us *in vitro,* so to speak, in our natural habitats. Also, they want to look good in those cities that foreigners visit. The democracies still count for something in the world—at least the United States does."

"Your democracies are governed by suckers," he mouths his favorite phrase. "There were political parties of all shades in Russia in the summer of 1917. Then every vestige of democracy was destroyed. Yet Britain and France came to the destroyer, in 1922, asking to trade. What can surprise me after 1922? Nothing. The entire subsequent history of the world, along with your democracies which will be squelched like Czechoslovakia, was written from 1918 to 1922. All of it."

"Well, what do you want? The serf-owner cannot sign a contract with all his human property down to the last man: 'We grant you herewith the freedom to live in the privacy of your homes, at least in the cities visited by foreigners, and you undertake, for your part, never to spread publicly what you create or think, not to mention acts like assembly or association. If you violate this contract we shall return to the situation as before 1953.' "

"No," he says with a sigh. "No such contract is possible."

"Before 1953 anyone suspected of less than infinite devotion would disappear. There was no such thing as martyrdom. He would vanish into the infernal unknown, and that was that. He might reappear, but as a different person inside the same physical frame: say, as a repentant ogre who had been poisoning children, preferably orphans, to spite the paradise-on-earth all around him. What sort of martyrdom can there be if there is no continuity of person before and after arrest? Now we have the chance of martyrdom, at least in the cities that foreigners can visit. If he is sentenced to imprisonment, and not 'psychiatric treatment,' a martyr may at least hope he will die his own self, a helpless cripple suffering from some horrible disease perhaps, but still his own self, see? Just as someone crucified in a Roman province two thousand years ago died his own self. As long as there is the chance of martyrdom there will be martyrs. But I am not sure that chance exists any longer, even in the cities that foreigners visit."

"I only know that those fellows you meet will draw you in," he mutters gloomily.

"I said, 'crucified.' The right to martyrdom. To one such martyr the state's Investigator may have just hinted that they will arrest his daughter as a suspected accomplice and for the course of the investigation imprison her by sheer mistake with thieves who will put her 'under a streetcar,' as it is called, that is, will rape her to death. No foreign correspondent will ever know. A mistake. Mistakes happen even in the best of prisons. Crucified? That was nothing, a Roman colony, you know—a high level of humanity by the standards of the time. Really nothing, comparatively."

"Insane, insane even to listen to this." His face is terrible, like a huge sick swollen liver. He has a son and a daughter. I am sorry I said what I said.

"The martyr didn't realize. He was unprepared. He thought: martyrdom. I will be crucified. He could not understand that this is not like

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a Roman colony of two thousand years ago."

He is not listening. He must be wondering whether he has been too careless of late.

"You may yet get involved, too," he repeats as a fierce warning. "Those fellows you meet—"

"They have been trapped in a way. They thought: laws, sentences, and all that. According to some law I will be sentenced to three years in prison, and according to another, six. But there *are* no laws or sentences. There's just the leniency of those in power—their grace, or mercy, or benevolence, putting someone in prison for only three or six years."

"What prison? What sentence, for God's sake? They will *sentence* you to three days of *prison*, but will forget to heat the cell, and there you are, a corpse. Who will prove anything? They have chemicals to induce disease. This is the 20th century, man."

"Some martyrs happen to believe that for all the horrors there is something basically good about the regime, because this is what they have been told from the cradle, and therefore the regime cannot be too cruel to them for their frank, trusting, loyal effort to suggest respectfully its further improvement for their mutual benefit. Others believe in the evolution of the regime because what else can one believe in? Anyway, there are so few of them that almost each case is unique—martyrs are never numerous, contrary to all apocryphal literature, they never belong to what I call *great numbers*, a term in the theory of great numbers."

As soon as I say "a term in the theory" his attention is switched off, but for a while I try desperately to trudge on.

"According to the law of great numbers there is something general in all fingerprints, and according to the law of small numbers there is something unique in each fingerprint. The whole point of man's knowledge and self-knowledge is not to confuse great numbers and small numbers, not to extend the domain of the small into the domain of the great, as writers and priests tend to do, or vice versa, as is often the practice of scientists. The case histories of martyrs are unique—for the most part. We cannot apply our own or anyone else's fingerprint to them."

"Those fellows you meet will draw you in," he repeats again, this time with an air of I-wash-my-hands-of-it finality.

"Suppose no one had been a martyr in the 60's, when there was the chance of martyrdom, or at least martyrs thought there was? What would it be like then? A country satisfied now and anon and forever with the freedom to think and create in the privacy of each inhabitant's home? The outside world would say: 'All people in Russia are serfs infinitely devoted to those in power—there are no martyrs there, there are none who would say they are not so devoted, at the cost of martyrdom.' As long as life has just another chance to moan and scream and call for all the world to hear, before infernal muteness descends again, how can you expect life to stop living with whatever life it can live?"

"I only know that I must keep away from this," he mutters, thinking his own thoughts.

"Also, we say: 'We are only microbes—we are not even the ladybug of Czechoslovakia, only microbes, and why should microbes displease those who let us live (though they may kill us as easily)?' But it can all be turned the other way around. Having found that the population consists largely of perfectly safe, mute, invisible microbes like you and me, those in power will not be deterred by the tiny remaining displeasure some microbes might still cause them. They will have only the most pleasant of microbes, existing or perishing equally invisibly. It is perhaps only in the shadow of these martyrs, in the hinterland of their reckless innocence, that our 60's were so happy. By their martyrdom they showed there is still some power of resistance in the strain, and that our own pleasant muteness is actually dangerous too. To those in power they speak for us: 'Look,' they say, 'this is our position, and for every one of us who accepts martyrdom for making it known, there are, obviously, unidentifiable numbers of microbes who have the same or even a less compliant attitude which may come out much more dangerously for you.' Anyway, life will live—and moan and scream and call as long as it can, and when there is no more martyrdom it will all go into hiding again. Into everyone's own self. An infinite country, with infinite lines of defense where life can still fight even in a minority of one against all mankind—and win."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Afterthoughts on the 20's

John W. Aldridge

THE publication last spring of Malcolm Cowley's *A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation** has reopened a question most of us might prefer to leave closed. Yet it continues to obsess us like the puzzle of some notorious unsolved crime. Just how important, really, was the generation of writers who are commonly assumed to have produced a renascence of American literature in the 1920's? What is the meaning and value of their contribution in the perspective of all that we know about them and all that has happened in our literature since their time?

Mr. Cowley, having spent fifty years studying these writers, may be forgiven if now, at seventy-five, he is unable or unwilling to offer much more than a reiteration of opinions that over the years have grown habitual with him and that have come to represent the official establishment answer to this question. His understandably strong feelings of proprietorship toward the 20's writers have caused him to take it for granted that, in spite of individual shortcomings of which he is well aware, they were, on the whole, the most distinguished literary generation the century has so far produced—the most distinguished, in fact, since the great first flowering of American literary talent in the generation of Emerson and Thoreau. Cowley has written eloquently in support of his position, and one can scarcely fault him for taking it. He has had a long career as a highly influential critical spokesman for these writers, most of whom were his personal friends. He was on the scene in Paris during the time when they were doing some of their best work, and he was one of the first critics to understand the significance of the whole artistic phenomenon which so profoundly affected the character of our literature after World War I. Today he is conscious of being a last survivor of that incredible era—left, as he has said, "with the sense of having plodded with others to the tip of a long sandspit where they stand exposed, surrounded by water, waiting for the tide to come in." If anyone has earned the right to his biases, Cowley surely has.

For the rest of us the problem of coming to terms with the 20's writers is considerably more complex. We have existed for years in a state of gross informational surfeit, in which we have become so drugged and bored with knowledge concerning every aspect of their lives and works that the possibility of making new and original assessments of them must strike us as being very remote indeed. Furthermore, their achievement as artists is now effectively inseparable in our minds from the legendry of their lives, while their works are so commonly seen as sourcebooks of gossip and invitations to nostalgia, that no balanced view of their literary merits can be maintained for long.

We also have to contend with our own emotional relation to them, a relation which cannot be as intimate and avuncular as Cowley's, but is no less affected by sentiment or what, in the case of literary people younger than he, has so often been the most abject kind of filial admiration. After all, the 20's generation were once our very special and personal property. We came to love them long before it became official wisdom to do so, and there are complex loyalties that bind us equally to them and to that part of ourselves which was formed by their influence. For many of us who discovered them at the right (or the wrong) age, they seemed quite simply the only real writers there were, and so they became our proxy writers. They had all the experiences we would have liked to have, and they wrote exactly the books we wished we might have written. It could be fairly said that they were the first and perhaps the only generation of writers to capture our imaginations and to dramatize an image of the literary life with which we could identify because it combined creative achievement with the freedom to explore the fullest possibilities of feeling and being. We may have had the greatest respect for the work of such older men as Dreiser, Mencken, Anderson, and Lewis, but we did not envy them their lives. Their generation seemed gray, remote, and permanently middle-aged. There

JOHN W. ALDRIDGE's works include *After the Lost Generation, In the Country of the Young,* and, most recently, *The Devil in the Fire: Retrospective Essays on American Literature and Culture, 1951-1971.* Mr. Aldridge has returned to the University of Michigan after serving a year as Special Advisor for American Studies at the U.S. Embassay in Bonn.

* Viking, 276 pp., $7.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was something about them that smelled of beer, cigars, pool halls, and the heavy sweat of craft and naturalism. One imagined them going off to the office every morning—pot-bellied businessmen of letters—carrying their inspiration in a lunch pail. But the 20's writers were a very different breed—elegant, aesthetic, temperamentally gifted rather than soberly skilled, as extravagant and wasteful as young British lords, yet profoundly self-preserving in their function as writers. They were distinguished from their elders, above all, by their dedication to the Flaubertian ideal of the artist, their sense of belonging to an aristocratic fraternity of talent. But they also believed in the interdependence of art and experience, the necessity that literature partake of, even as it transformed to suit its own purposes, the felt realities and passions of the individual life.

They thus embodied for us an adolescent ideal which is deeply rooted in our native mythos but which, in recent years, only Norman Mailer has been able to emulate with any conviction, the ideal of the writer as poet-profligate, our fantasy inheritance from the English Romantics which for the first time among the 20's writers became a practical model of conduct for Americans. Hence, they found it possible to live the life of sensation with great vigor and still live the life of literature with great dedication and success. They were able to have it both ways so splendidly, and they made such excellent use of the opportunity, that some of us will probably never manage to see them except against the high colorations of jealousy or adoration.

ANOTHER factor obscuring our view of these writers is that they were largely responsible for developing in us the standards by which we might have been able to judge them. For it was on the evidence of their work and that of their European contemporaries that we formed our impressions of what literary effects were possible to the modern sensibility. No other standards derived from other historical periods seemed quite applicable to them, if only because so much of their significance resulted from their collective belief that they had outmoded the past by confronting a new reality in ways wholly unique to it and to them. Also, in a very real sense the 20's writers provided the basic assumptions through which we came to perceive, and some of us to express, the experience of the modern world. Their works for a very long time seemed to have done all our essential imagining for us, just as they themselves seemed to have done our essential living, so that we had very little sense of being engaged with life that was not in some way connected with the profoundly seductive images of life with which they first came to dominate our imaginations.

By the same token, our view of the literary life of the 20's is a complex mixture of myth and reality, of reality fantasized into myth and myth personalized to the point where it seems like something we ourselves experienced. One does not know, for example, whether the literature created the fantasy or the fantasy found its embodiment in the literary life. But surely a strong attraction of the period for young people was and may still be the fact that it represents their vision of the perfect college literary apprenticeship exported to Paris and prolonged for a decade. The intense, free life of Montparnasse was the idealized equivalent of the intense, free life of the campus literati. There, happily far away from parents and home town, it was possible to get drunk as often as one pleased, to stay up all night making love, wander the streets howling into the dawn, be eternally young, sensitive, and promising, do all kinds of experimental work and publish it in the little magazines, be read by an audience of friends who were the perfect classmates, all people of brilliant talent and wit and yet, except for a few, remarkably kind and helpful about one's own work. There too one could enjoy the presence of older teachers and mentors like Pound, Anderson, and Stein, the quintessential writing instructors who were the first to recognize one's gifts and gave generously of their advice and encouragement. But perhaps even more important were certain other perquisites of these literary junior years abroad: the advantages of not having to hold down a job because checks were coming regularly from home or one was on a fellowship, not having to be compromised by the bourgeois values of one's parents, not having to worry about marriage and a family, not having responsibilities of any kind except to Art, Truth, and one's friends.

It is not surprising that this image of the Paris literary life should be embellished in our minds by a cast of personages, both fictional and actual, who have the clarity of outline, the individuality, and the emotional openness which, as a rule, only young people of college age seem to possess. Their appearance and behavior remain with us almost as if recollected from life or recorded in a class yearbook in which we seem to find versions of our own former selves. Nobody will ever be like them again, and nobody will need to be. For these people exist in the roles fixed for them by memory and sentiment—larger than life because they belong to a generation which managed to mythologize its experience while still in the act of having it.

There is young Jay Gatsby, helplessly in love with the rich and sophisticated sorority girl, holding out his arms to the green light at the end of her boat dock; Amory Blaine proclaiming his valedictory "I know myself but that is all"; Eugene Gant, forever seeking "the lost lane-end into heaven . . . a stone, a leaf, an unfound door . . ."; Jake Barnes muttering through those bitter, bitter teeth the best line in the senior play, "Yes, isn't it pretty to think so"; Scott and Zelda, the most pop-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ular and beautiful couple on the campus, behaving insufferably at parties, jumping fully clothed into the Plaza fountain; Hemingway, the most talented boy in the class, writing his first stories at a table in the Closerie des Lilas; good old Tom Wolfe, a boy who never seemed to stop growing, getting very drunk, waving his arms, and knocking out the electrical system of an entire town. And remember the others, the people like Harry Crosby, Slater Brown, William Bird, Robert McAlmon, and the Gerald Murphys, who matter only because they were friends of the famous and now belong to history simply because everyone connected, however remotely, with the Paris literary life in the 20's now belongs to history.

The writers whom Leslie Fiedler once called "great stereotype-mongers" have bequeathed us themselves and their characters as clichés, and criticism has made more clichés out of the essential arguments that can be brought against them. Yet the most familiar argument is also the least avoidable. They were a group of highly talented but narrow writers, and their narrowness was most dramatically revealed in the fact that they had one abiding interest, themselves when young, an interest which, in the case of some of them, became the literary preoccupation of a lifetime. Their books had all the attributes of young consciousness. They were lyrical, nostalgic, sentimental, stylish, experimental, and iconoclastic, and they told over and over again the story of self-discovery through the first conquest of experience. We learned from them what it is like to grow up in the small towns of America, how it feels to fall in love, have sex, get drunk, go to war, to be an American in Europe, all for the first time, to be so hungry for life that you want to consume all the food, liquor, and women in the world, or to discover that the system created by adults is capitalistic and corrupt or hypocritical and dull.

Fitzgerald wrote the story of young romance and riotous youth and, remarkably enough, became famous at twenty-four largely on the strength of the fact that he informed the older generation about just how badly the young really behaved. Hemingway's first and best materials were an adolescent's adventures in Europe, his initiation into the mystery cult of foreign sports, bullfighting, and big-game hunting, the loss of his innocence through the death of his ideals and his love in European war. Dos Passos found his most dependable subject in the totalitarianism of social hierarchies, whether political, economic, or military, in which the integrity of the young was destroyed or severely compromised and the artistic spirit broken under the grinding pressures of the machine. There are very few people over forty in this literature, and when they do appear, we recognize them by their stigmata of physical ugliness, venality, and hypocrisy. Only the young are truly human, but then the young are doomed to be the victims of the old, to die in their wars, to be tricked by their deceits, ruined through seduction by their false gods.

It is logical that the qualities we remember most clearly in this literature are those that impressed us when we ourselves were young—the marvelous intensity about people and raw experience, the preoccupation with the self, with love, sex, freedom, time, adventure, the irreverence toward the world of the fathers, the disdain for the adult religion of work, self-sacrifice, expediency, competition, and conformity. It is also logical that so many of these writers were able to function effectively only so long as they could keep alive their youthful responses. A number did not live into middle age. Some died romantically young, others like Fitzgerald died old while still chronologically young. Of those who survived beyond fifty, almost all were engaged in reiterating the experiences of their youth or continued, as did Hemingway, to write out of a fading memory of emotional and intellectual premises established during the time of their first intense engagement with life.

They were, in fact, the first American literary generation to make being young into both a style of life and a state of grace. It is largely because of their influence that so many Americans are unable to perceive experience except as something that happens to one up to the age of thirty, or to understand that life can on occasion be other than a process of losing the intensities one was once able to feel. At the end of that fateful confrontation between Gatsby and Tom Buchanan in the Plaza Hotel, Nick Carraway suddenly remembers that it is his thirtieth birthday—"Thirty—the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning brief-case of enthusiasm, thinning hair." Read for the first time at eighteen, the passage seems one of the most poignant in the novel. But then, perhaps years later, we come to recognize that our sympathies should go not to Nick but to Fitzgerald. It is his limited vision of the possibilities of life which is exposed here, even as it is this same limitation which makes Gatsby a convincing and pathetic character.

One reason for this preoccupation with youth is that World War I had the effect of seeming to annihilate past history and the old styles of history. Hence, the generation which had fought in the war felt urgently the need to establish new premises, to redefine the terms of existence. Not only was this necessarily a task for youth, but it placed unique and dramatic emphasis on the responses of youth. Only the young were sensitive and adjustable enough to be able to determine whether a given emotion or experience conformed to the new standards of authenticity produced by the war. Besides, they were the ones who had been there, been initiated, had heard all the big words and learned that those

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

words did not describe how they felt or what they had been through. Thus, the literature of the 20's is not merely a narcissistic but a testing literature, one in which writers were trying to create an accurate new idiom and at the same time determine the truth or falsity of a radically new experience —most often according to the responses of a provisional and existential, inevitably youthful self.

Fortunately, there were elements that worked powerfully to their advantage. First, there was the fact that their consciousness of being unique and their experience unprecedented was validated by social and moral changes so profound that a literary career might be constructed around the process simply of recording them. These writers were in a position to be among the first to witness such changes, and they were aided greatly by what Frederick J. Hoffman once called their creatively "useful innocence," their small-town sensitivity to forms of conduct which, in spite of their surface sophistication, they could not help judging by the provincial standards they had been brought up on. It is not surprising that some of their best work has the incandescent quality of the astonished spectator, privileged to be on the scene of first encounters involving people who suddenly seem no longer to know by what assumptions they should behave.

Secondly, their prolonged apprenticeship in Europe enabled them to view American life from the perspective not only of distance but of adversary cultural values. They had inherited from their predecessors—most notably Lewis, Mencken, and Van Wyck Brooks—an intellectual arrogance, a disdain for bourgeois society, and a belief in the absolute supremacy of art and the artist which were formed into a metaphysics under the tutelage of Stein and Pound. They became cosmopolitan provincials abroad; they learned to judge America by essentially elitist European standards; and of course they found America provincial. But since they were themselves provincial, their attitudes retained a dimension of ambivalence that helped to humanize their satire and finally made it seem an expression more of regret than contempt.

They had, in short, a strong sense of belonging to, or being able to identify imaginatively with, place, perhaps just because they were physically so displaced—not only from home but from the past represented by home. They may have been creatively stimulated by the experience of living in a dramatic, changing present, but they could also feel anxious and uncertain and in need of the structures of coherence and identity they had left behind in the Midwest and South. This undoubtedly accounts for the fact that Hemingway and Fitzgerald were so continuously preoccupied with procedural questions, with the effort to formulate dependable rules of feeling and conduct. Hemingway's works can be read as a series of instruction manuals on how to respond to and behave in the testing situations of life now that the rules have changed. It might also be argued that some of his most dependable instructions are those he was able to reclaim from the past, in particular the American frontier past, the lessons of courage, fidelity, and honor which might still have the power to influence human conduct when all other values were being called into question. Fitzgerald's best novels are restatements of Henry James's great theme: the implications of the misuse of power over those who are innocent and helpless by those who are strong and unscrupulous.

In short, one finds in these writers and in some of their contemporaries a concern with the moral authenticity of certain traditions they might have presumed to be outmoded. It may be expressed only in a nostalgic recurrence to the locales that provided security in childhood—Hemingway's Big Two-Hearted River or Wolfe's Old Catawba. But it may also involve complex loyalties and codes of honor that once gave a human dimension to life—as Nick Carraway discovers through the experience of Gatsby and Dick Diver through his marriage to Nicole. Both characters derived a "sense of the fundamental decencies" from their fathers and so can evaluate and ultimately condemn a society in which such decencies no longer have meaning.

One of the very best of Fitzgerald's stories, "Babylon Revisited," is yet another expression of the desire to reconstitute certain values of moral discipline and self-control after the violent dissipations of the decade that ended in bankruptcy in 1929. Charlie Wales, a battered survivor of the time, returns to Paris in the hope of regaining custody of his daughter. To do this he must prove to his sister-in-law that he has become a fit and responsible person. He very nearly succeeds in convincing her, but fails at the last moment when two of his old drinking friends reappear and destroy his chances of making a new life. Just as Nick after Gatsby's death wanted "the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever," so Charlie felt the need "to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element." But there is no escape from the consequences of his wasted past:

> Again the memory of those days swept over him like a nightmare—the people they had met traveling; then people who couldn't add a row of figures or speak a coherent sentence . . . the women and girls carried screaming with drink or drugs out of public places.
>
> —The men who locked their wives out in the snow, because the snow of twenty-nine wasn't real now. If you didn't want it to be snow, you just paid some money.

THE act of moral reclamation may be a necessity for every literary generation. In America we do not so much build on tradition as steal from it those elements we think may help us to understand the always unprec-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

edented experience of our own time. The 20's writers had a singular relation to the problem. They had the strongest sense that their experience was indeed unprecedented and that the older modes of literary statement were inadequate to describe it. They therefore became excessively preoccupied with experience and, in both their writing and their lives, with the innovative and defiant. For reasons perhaps of temperament and historical position they were fixated at the level of *rite de passage,* where they were condemned permanently to play the roles of rebellious sons and wayward daughters, able to find their identity only in the degree of their opposition to the literary and social conventions of the past.

Yet in reviewing their achievement one is struck by how often their most admirable qualities seem to have been achieved at those rare moments when the writer was able, perhaps by accident, perhaps out of desperation, to transcend the limits of the adversary stance and define his materials in some clear relation to the sustaining values of an older tradition. If Fitzgerald and Hemingway experienced such moments, as some of their best work would seem to indicate, they did so only occasionally because the life of their own time absorbed them much too completely, and they were never able to see that life in a consistently maintained moral perspective.

All that Dos Passos essentially had to support his intricately panoramic vision of American society were the values of an adversary politics, and it is significant that as he grew older, his vision did not deepen: only his politics aged. E. E. Cummings and Hart Crane were, in their very different ways, poetically adversary. Cummings made a limited kind of artistic convention out of wit and irreverence, while Crane, like Wolfe, sought all his life for a convention that would give shape and significance to the chaotic responses of his personality. Both poets had the defect of being confined by personality, and Crane in particular existed in that state of psychic nihilism in which, as one critic has observed, "any move is possible because none is necessary."

The examples of Faulkner and, on a much lower level, Thornton Wilder should serve to remind us that there were alternatives to the more fashionable positions taken by so many of the 20's generation. There were alternatives *if* one possessed, as Wilder did, an intellectual culture broad enough to enable one to draw creatively on the whole of Western literary tradition, or if one had Faulkner's access to the abundant resources of the Southern tradition. But without these advantages, supplemented by talent of very large size, too many of the 20's writers remained locked into their first youthful responses to an experience that was too overwhelmingly intense to serve as very much more than the material of an often brilliant, but very personal and limited literature. They may be forever established in our minds as the immensely charismatic personages of one of the most dramatic decades in our literary history. But it is significant that we can never separate them from the image we retain of the life of their time, just as they could never separate themselves and, in so doing, become larger than their experience, its imaginative possessors, the shapers of those truths it contained which might have made timeless in art what is otherwise lost to history.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Stalemate Society

Rudolf Klein

At the beginning of this century, most people living in America worked with their hands, either in factories or on the land. By the middle of the century barely half did so. By 1980, little more than a third will do so if present trends continue. During the same period, the proportion of white-collar workers rose from one in six of the total manpower force to one in three in 1950. By the end of this decade, the figure is expected to be one in two. From being an industrial society, America has become a service society. From being a society in which the ability to read and write was the main qualification required of new entrants into the labor force, the country seems to be moving to the point where anyone who hasn't been to college will be barely employable in any except the most menial tasks. (Indeed, using the methodology of extrapolation from recent trends, so popular among the prophets of ecological doom, one should be able to demonstrate that soon after the year 2000 a Ph.D. will have become essential to anyone looking for work.) What is more, all economically developed nations appear to be moving in the same direction—with the United States, as the richest and most developed country, simply moving ahead of the rest of the pack. The imperatives of modern technology seem to be creating a new sort of society, transforming social structure as much as physical environment.

Neither the recognition of these trends nor debate over their possible implications is a recent phenomenon. A vast speculative literature has collected on the fly-paper of this particular subject, which offers lush opportunities for do-it-yourself sermonizing. Thus, there are those who foresee a world dominated by "knowledge-capitalism" (Ivan Illich's phrase) or by the technostructure (John Kenneth Galbraith's). Others, more hopefully, see a forced convergence of capitalist and communist societies, with technology making a monkey of ideology and politics. Indeed the rapidity with which such ideas are diffused—often in a very simplified form—is in itself a tribute to the powers of the technology of communication; sometimes it seems as though ideas were now manufactured on much the same principle as consumer durables—that is, with a view to appealing to the largest possible market and having the shortest possible life before being thrown away to be replaced by a new model.

In all this, however, there is a danger that ideas may become accepted as part of the conventional wisdom long before they have been fully argued out or developed. Thus, it is only ten years since Daniel Bell, one of the most eminent of the social analysts who have devoted themselves to these issues, first began to explore the emergence of what he called the "post-industrial society." Now that he has put together in book form* his various writings on the theme, he runs the risk of paying the usual penalty of the pioneer. So many others have dipped their buckets into this particular intellectual well that the shock of novelty has, to a large extent, worn off. Familiarity with simplified, secondhand versions of Bell's ideas may tempt some to believe they have already read the sophisticated complexities of the original. This would be a pity. For in a sense the importance of Bell's work lies less in his conclusions—which are interesting precisely because they stimulate disagreement—than in his way of working toward them.

The occupational disease of those who, like Bell, write about the future is prophecy. On the whole, Bell himself is immune to the bacillus—an immunity that springs from his recognition of the complexity of social forces and the consequent danger of deducing what will happen or what might happen from what has happened, assuming (a very big and very frequent assumption) that no new, entirely unforeseen factor will come into play. Similarly, he is aware that there are many ways of slicing the analytic cake. Looking at the impact of technology on the social structure is only one of these; it is equally important to examine the impact of changing attitudes on the political structure and on the culture. And

Rudolf Klein, who has written for Commentary, the *Public Interest*, the *Observer*, and other periodicals, is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Studies in Social Policy in London. Mr. Klein's book, *Complaints against Doctors: A Study in Professional Accountability*, has recently been published in England.

* *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Basic Books, 528 pp., $12.50.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what actually happens will depend—as Bell stresses—on the social chemistry of the reaction among all three elements, the political, the social, and the cultural. It is possible to speculate intelligently about the outcome of this reaction; indeed, it is highly desirable to do so in order to equip ourselves intellectually to meet the unexpected. But speculation about the possible must not be confused with prediction.

Bell is cautious, then, in forecasting what *will* happen, but he is emphatic in his diagnosis of what *has* happened: the basic change, as he sees it, in the structure of American society that will determine future options. Knowledge has replaced property, in his view, as the primary source of power. The scarce commodity in post-industrial societies is not capital or goods but expertise.

> In the post-industrial society, the chief problem is the organization of science, and the primary institution the university or the research institute where such work is carried out. In the 19th and early 20th centuries the strength of nations was their industrial capacity, the chief index of which was steel production. . . . After the Second World War, the scientific capacity of a country has become a determinant of its potential and power, and research-and-development has replaced steel as a comparative measure of the strength of the powers.

At the same time, there have been a number of other crucial developments, according to Bell. Chief among these is a shift in emphasis from profit-maximization to welfare-maximization. Abundance has produced precisely those problems (pollution, traffic jams) and wants (health care, education) which call for a collective approach. Hence the phenomenon, common to all highly developed economies, irrespective of the prevailing ideology, of an expansion in state activity, whether measured by the proportion of the Gross National Product spent by government or by the amount of direct intervention and regulation. Hence, also, the gradual transformation of the business corporation, in which not only is control being divorced increasingly from the ownership of capital but the interests of both the community at large and of those actually working for the corporation may well come to prevail over the interest of the stockholders. More and more, Bell argues, corporations are becoming like universities, in the sense of being primarily responsible to their own members and to the wider community: self-preservation and self-perpetuation, as distinct from profit-making, become the main driving forces.

In this process, the role of the new scientific, professional, and technical "estates" is crucial. Power is passing to them, and not only because of their rapidly growing numbers (by 1975, they will account for nearly a fifth of the total work force in the United States). The growth in their numbers simply reflects, after all, the growth of certain types of activity. It is because society is increasingly coming to depend on (or value) these activities—research, development, health care, education, social work—that the knowledge "estates" are gaining in power. Equally important, these "estates" tend to straddle the traditional demarcation lines between public and private power (between government and business). There is not only the fact, noted by Galbraith, that the same sorts of people, with the same sorts of values, work in both spheres: a scientist moves from a government laboratory to a private firm's laboratory, and vice versa. But, in addition, the nature of technological activity, in particular its cost, means that both laboratories are in any case likely to be financed by the taxpayer.

In short, as one analyzes the emergent social structure, one sees that the traditional ways of dissection are becoming rather meaningless; the distribution of scientific, professional, and technical manpower has become an increasingly helpful way of explaining both the articulation of society's skeleton and the flow of its blood. And the new social anatomy, moreover, begins to look remarkably like a kind of feudalism,* with power in the hands of the "estates" controlling the key institutions: universities, corporations, research institutes.

II

THERE are a number of real difficulties in trying to present Bell's argument concerning the change in the distribution of power in post-industrial society. One is that Bell assumes the change, rather than demonstrating it; another is that he fails to define what he means by power. Thus, the fact that society increasingly depends on the "estates" does not necessarily prove that the "estates" are gaining power. It might similarly be argued that, given the complexity of our cities, we are becoming increasingly dependent on street cleaners, sewage workers, and rubbish movers: a reasonable enough proposition, but one from which it does not follow that these workers are gaining in power (except perhaps in the power to demand and get higher wages). There are many dimensions of power, and the ability to gain higher rewards is only one. There is the power to regulate one's own life or work; the power to control other people's lives or work; the power to influence policy decisions at various levels of national or local government. The list is not meant to be exhaustive, only to show that it is quite conceivable that the "estates" may lose out on some aspects of power while gaining on others; scientists, for example, may forfeit autonomy and control over their own activities by becoming government employees,

* The term is Theodore J. Lowi's, used in his onslaught on pluralism, *The End of Liberalism*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while at the same time obtaining access to, and influence over, governmental decision-making.

It is necessary, moreover, to distinguish among the different "estates." On the whole, in his discussion of the changing balance of power in post-industrial societies, Bell tends to lump together scientists, professionals, and technicians. He analyzes the scientific community at some length since he believes (in a rare lapse into jargon) that "the scientific estate—its ethos and its organization—is the monad that contains within itself the imago of the future society." The implication is that what holds for science also holds for professionals and for technicians like engineers. But does it? If science is indeed a special kind of social arrangement designed to achieve, by a process of free inquiry and peer judgment, "a consensus of rational opinion," is the same true to anything like the same extent of medicine, of teaching, of social work? Michael Oakeshott's distinction between two sorts of knowledge seems particularly relevant here:

> The first sort of knowledge I . . . call technical knowledge or knowledge of technique. . . . The technique (or part of it) of driving a motor car on English roads is to be found in the Highway Code, the technique of discovery in natural science or in history is in their rules of research, of observation and verification. The second sort of knowledge I . . . call practical, because it exists only in use, is not reflective, and (unlike technique) cannot be formulated into rules (*Rationalism in Politics,* 1962).

All Bell's "estates" use both sorts of knowledge, but in different measure. Their organization, their ethos, and their method of work will vary according to the precise nature of the mix. Thus, the professions tend to place more emphasis on the second kind of knowledge, while technicians tend to stress the first. Even within the same profession, there will be variations: in medicine, for example, the surgeon may see himself as a technician using scientific methods based on "a consensus of rational opinion," while the psychiatrist may depend heavily on charismatic authority. Indeed there would seem to be a significant distinction to be made, as far as society is concerned, between those "estates" which (like scientists) seek to explore natural phenomena and those which (like social workers, teachers, and doctors in varying degrees) are engaged in a form of social control over people.

Similarly, in any discussion of scientific method and "the consensus of rational opinion" it is important to distinguish between rationality of means and rationality of ends. Consider in illustration the recently published report of the British government's inquiry into the reasons Rolls-Royce went bankrupt after it undertook to supply aircraft engines for Lockheed.* Here was a company that might be taken as a prototype of the corporation in the post-industrial society: dominated by engineers, subsidized by government money, engaged in pushing forward the frontiers of the technically feasible. It went bankrupt because the development of technology became an end in itself and because, as a consequence, an *irrational commitment* was undertaken:

> The board, as it appears to us, treated this essentially as a matter upon which it should be guided by the assessment of those experienced aero-engineers from among its members who were most closely concerned with the project. . . . Their standing in Rolls-Royce was such that they could and did influence the decisions of their colleagues in this matter. Their knowledge and experience should have enabled them to recognize the awesome dangers of the venture. But they shared an abiding conviction that without an involvement in this sector of the aero-engine market the future of Rolls-Royce would be but a shadow of its past. . . . To conclude a contract with a U.S. manufacturer had become for them not merely a consummation devoutly to be wished, but a task in which failure would be unthinkable. This is not an attitude of mind best calculated to produce the most objective analysis of the risks involved. Nor did it. The terms ultimately negotiated meant a commitment for Rolls-Royce which placed at hazard its continued existence.

The quotation illustrates a number of points. It provides evidence for the Bell thesis of the power of the "estates": a power which in this case (as in many others) seems to have rested on the incapacity or unwillingness of laymen to challenge technical expertise—a sort of deference to the authority of the new technological priesthood. It indicates also, however, that this particular power can all too easily be abused when technical development becomes an end in itself: it suggests the need for some form of control. And this is where politics comes in.

III

IN EFFECT, as I have noted, Bell's analysis of the changes that have taken place in the organization and distribution of power in society assumes a new sort of feudalism, with the "estates" controlling the key institutions of the university, the corporations, and so forth. Inevitably the question arises as to what the relationship will be between the "estates" and the political structure of society—to what extent their power will be independent of that structure and to what extent subordinated to it. Yet to this question Bell gives no clear answer. By controlling the techniques of governmental management, including especially the intellectual machinery of decision-making—itself transformed by

* R. A. MacCrindle and P. Godfrey, *Rolls-Royce Limited: An Investigation under Section 165 (a) (1) of the Companies Act 1948.* HMSO (London), 1973.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the development of systems analysis and the computer simulation of problem situations—it would seem that the "estates" will simply be the ultimate holders of power in society. As Bell concludes at one point, "It is clear that in the society of the future, however one defines it, the scientist, the professional, the technician and the technocrat will play a predominant role in the political life of the society." Elsewhere and repeatedly, however, he recoils from the full implications of this statement. The reasons for Bell's hesitancy on this crucial point are themselves worth examining for the light they shed on the relation between the "estates" and politics.

Bell rightly points out that science and politics have different styles: "In science, 'truth' is achieved through controversy and criticism, in which a single answer has to be forthcoming. In the polity, a consensus is achieved through bargaining and trade-offs, and the answers are a compromise." To this extent, then, improving the technology of decision-making leaves open the question of *who* makes the final decision, and for what reasons. Greater knowledge can improve decision-making in the sense of creating new perceptions about the nature of problems and the available options for solving them; this, however, does not remove politics—construed as judgments about what is right or possible—from the process. (It does not, for example, tell us what a desirable distribution of income is.) So Bell concludes, rightly in my view, but inconsistently with some of his other statements, "In the end, the technocratic mind-view necessarily falls before politics; the hopes of rationality—or, of a particular kind of rationality—necessarily fade. . . . Politics, in the sense that we understand it, is always prior to the rational, and often the upsetting of the rational." This is a long way from the assumption that the emergence of a knowledge society in itself determines the power structure, rather than being one of the elements within it, creating new tensions, new coalitions, and new outcomes in the determination of priorities and policies.

THE real difficulty in trying to speculate intelligently about the future is knowing how large a role will be played by the various elements in the social equation. Will the scientists and professionals play a "predominant" role, as Bell suggests? Or will they simply play a large role, alongside other social groupings, as he also implies? Are they a new class, or are they merely a new, if powerful, pressure group?

It would clearly be absurd to be dogmatic on this point. But there is much evidence—some of it provided by Bell himself—to suggest that it might be a mistake to regard the emergence of the "estates" in the same terms as the emergence, say, of the entrepreneurial middle classes in the late 18th century—to assume that the former will put their imprint on post-industrial society in the same way the latter put their impression on industrial society. To begin with, there must be some question, as I have already noted, about equating the growth in numbers of scientists and technicians with that of teachers and doctors, many of whom may well be anti-technological in their ethos and attitudes. Nor does it follow, as Bell recognizes, that the "estates" will necessarily be internally coherent: their members may be torn in their loyalties between their own reference group and the demands of their organizations (but this in itself is to concede that the organizations, whether profit-making or not, may have different aims from those of the supposedly dominating professions).

More interesting still, to compound perplexity about the future, change is not one-directional. That is, the explosion in the numbers of the "estates" affects them as well as society. Thus, the old entrepreneurial values—whose obituaries have filled so many books and articles—seem to be creeping back, and finding new life, in precisely those institutions that are supposed to be transforming society in the reverse direction. The academy, where a large part of the average faculty member's time is spent preparing applications for grants, is perhaps the most striking case in point. To an extent Bell recognizes this trend when he points out that the new "estates" are increasingly becoming client groups, hammering on the doors of government for more funds. But he fails to give sufficient weight to this development or explore its implications fully. For the relationship between client and donor—whether the client be a university or a corporation seeking development funds—is a subtle and complex one. Governments come to be dependent on pressure groups for information and, provided the constituency is big enough, are reluctant to cut off their funds. But to a considerable degree the client is even more dependent in the relation, not only because he needs government money to continue his work, but because the terms on which the money is given (or withheld) have a decisive influence on the kind of work he will do. The relationship, in other words, tends to become one of mutual readjustment, and need not necessarily result in the imposition of one set of values on another.

Then there is the matter of participation in the political process. Bell argues that as professionalism becomes a criterion of position it clashes with the populism which is generated by the claims for more rights and greater participation in the society. "If the struggle between capitalist and worker, in the locus of the factory, was the hallmark of industrial society, the clash between the professional and the populace, in the organization and in the community, is the hallmark of conflict in the post-industrial society." And elsewhere he asserts: "To a considerable extent, the participation revolution is one of the forms of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reaction against the 'professionalization' of society and the emergent technocratic decision-making of a post-industrial society. But it seems to me that the phenomenon of professionalization and that of participation in the political process are cause-and-effect in a rather different sense from that implied by Bell. The important contrast may be not between professionals and the general population, but between professionals *qua* professionals and professionals *qua* citizens. In other words, the most committed participant may be the professional *after* he steps out of his working role and into his role as citizen, where he finds himself cast as a passive consumer of decisions made for him by others. Real participation is a high-cost activity in terms of the information required and the time spent, and it would be surprising to find that this too, though certainly not exclusively, were to become a professional activity; indeed, a recent study* suggests that protest itself is becoming highly professionalized.

To make this point is, if anything, to reinforce Bell's conclusion that the main problem for the future in the political sphere is going to be the "relation between the desire for popular participation and bureaucracy." But it is also to stress that the coming clash should be seen not merely as a popular reaction to the professionalization of society—though that is certainly one element—but as a product of professionalism itself. Indeed, it is surprising in this connection that Bell does not appear to attach very much importance to the possibility that a frustrated intellectual proletariat, excluded from participation in decision-making and condemned to routine work, may develop *within* the "estates": that these, far from being cohesive and homogeneous groups, may become microcosms of conflict within the society as everyone seeks to "participate." Could it be that professionalization creates new expectations in this direction, just as prosperity creates new expectations about standards of living?

IV

IN ANY CASE, it may be that at present there is too much emphasis on participation and too little on accountability. (The two are, of course, linked.) This is another question to which Bell has no clear answer: to what extent and by what means will the "estates" be controlled or held accountable? Already a great many decisions—and there will be a great many more, if indeed the intellectual sophistication of the process grows—are extremely difficult for the layman (for example, the consumer of a professional service like medicine) to grasp or "participate in" in any meaningful sense. This is particularly true of those areas where science has, in Bell's terms, a charismatic aspect. But it is also true of a great many routine cost-benefit exercises in which the recommended outcome may depend on which factors are included and how they are weighted in the analysis: how, for instance, leisure time is valued, what importance is attached to amenity factors like noise and privacy, and so on. It is difficult to see anything except sham participation in circumstances like these unless and until some form of accountability is developed; until, in short, it becomes possible to scrutinize the way the expertise of the "estates" is being applied. In the last resort, it seems to me, participation depends on evolving forms of counter-expertise in the service of the "populace," to use Bell's word.

The problem of accountability also arises in the case of the new centers of power as delineated by Bell: the corporation, the university, and the research institute. If profit ceases to be the yardstick of corporation performance, what should replace it? As universities become quasi-entrepreneurial institutions, seeking to maximize not knowledge but their own activities, who will decide what resources should be allocated to them and how they should be used? A case could be made here for much stronger political institutions, capable of carrying out forms of control which have yet to be devised, let alone executed. To introduce this consideration is to recognize a paradox underlined by the experience of those European countries where government already plays an even larger role than it does in America. This is that state control—for example, in industries like steel, coal, and the railways in Britain—cannot be equated in any sense with participatory or popular control. The larger the area of intervention by government, the greater the role of the administrative technocracy. The pressure to delegate power to the bureaucracy, and, if need be, to create new, semi-autonomous, quasi-governmental institutions, has the effect of actually reducing the power exercised by elected governors or representatives. The more we seek to control technology, the greater becomes the temptation to extend the power of the "estates" in the process.

Bell does not provide a shopping-list of solutions for problems like these (or, one might add, to others of the many issues he raises and deals with here: the development of a new culture, no longer supportive of the work ethos, increasingly at odds with the social structure; or the tension between the demands of technology for a meritocracy and the populist demand for equality of results as distinct from equality of opportunity and esteem—a theme he handles with particular brilliance). His book, with its remarkable richness of scholarship, is designed to stretch the reader's intellectual imagination, not to supply a set of ready-made recipes for action. Yet, in a way, it conveys a more urgent message for precisely this

* John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization*, General Learning Press, 1973.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reason. Perhaps the main conclusion to be drawn from the work is not that America and other post-industrial societies must prepare to meet certain specific crises, but that they must develop a more generalized political and institutional capacity to meet difficulties and cope with issues which cannot even be specified at this particular moment in time. The post-industrial society, as Bell emphasizes again and again, creates the opportunity and the need for more conscious social policies in the largest sense. But it may also, one pessimistically concludes from reading his book, make it more difficult to implement those policies.

For there seems to be a real possibility that the post-industrial society will also turn out to be a stalemate society. If, indeed, we are moving toward a new feudalism—in which power is becoming concentrated in self-regulating corporations and academic institutions—then it is the capacity for collective action which may suffer. And if we are indeed entering an era in which the main emphasis is on political participation—which, by definition, means the ability to stop things from getting done—then it may become more, not less, difficult to move beyond the lowest common denominator of political action. Technology may give society some of the tools required to shape its own future; it may also create a social situation in which it will become impossible to use those tools effectively.

October 10, 1973

For the fourth time since its creation, Israel is engaged in battle with the neighboring Arab world. It is a battle which is uneven in two respects. In the first place, if Israel wins, the world will endure; if the Arabs win, Israel will cease to exist. Secondly, there is no equivalence in the forces engaged. Syria and Egypt have drawn on enormous forces, both of manpower and of materiel. Sixteen other Arab countries have expressed their solidarity with them, and a number have already sent units of their armed forces to join in the battle. Israel faces this situation as a small people fighting on its own. Nearly all of our students, and most of our colleagues, are today in uniform.

We, the undersigned, have always used our right as free men to express our views on our country's policies, both external and internal; and some of us have disagreed with some of these policies in the past. Today it is clear to all of us beyond any shadow of doubt, that Egypt and Syria prepared this attack over a long period, and deliberately chose to launch it on the Day of Atonement, the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar.

It is equally clear to us that, though aware of the Egyptian and Syrian plans, the government of Israel chose to abstain from a preemptive strike, and rather to do all it could to avert the danger by a diplomatic effort.

The real issue today, as it was in 1967, is the determination by Egypt and Syria to destroy Israel.

We are doubly convinced that the road to meaningful negotiations for a peaceful outcome has always been open to the Arab states. Had that road been taken by the Arab states, the response of our people and our government would have been such as to ensure that every conceivable step would be taken toward bringing these negotiations to a mutually acceptable and positive conclusion.

The Egyptian and Syrian attack against us on the Day of Atonement has led us to the painful conclusion that the policy of the present governments of the Arab states is to go to any length to nullify the existence of Israel.

There can be no peace until the Arab states change their policy, and understand that the future of the Middle East must take the form of peaceful coexistence between them and Israel.

The cause of organizing a peaceful world is based on the right of all peoples to free existence and harmonious national self-expression and self-government. These rights cannot be denied to Israel and its people.

For this reason, we feel that it is the duty of free men throughout the world who cherish the cause of peace and see it as a precondition of humanity's survival and development, to insist on the overriding duty of the Arab states to recognize Israel's right to exist in peace, and to demonstrate this by agreeing immediately to meet the representatives of Israel for discussion and negotiation.

The Arab doctrine of prior agreement by Israel to withdraw from territory, is illogical and unacceptable. Every one of us is wholly convinced that our very existence today—that we have been able, at considerable cost in lives, to withstand Egyptian and Syrian assault and turn it back—is due to the fact that this doctrine was rejected by us. The way in which the Egyptian and Syrian attack was prepared and launched must convince the world that this rejection was thoroughly justified.

The argument has been voiced that, having suffered military defeat in the past, the Arabs cannot be expected to negotiate with Israel unless a "gesture" is made by Israel. The "gesture" demanded has been that Israel should place the Arabs unconditionally, and prior to any agreement or commitment on their part, in a position where, as experience shows, it would be made easier for them to attack Israel. We cannot agree that this is morally acceptable or practically feasible. Nor should the world so agree. For the fourth time since 1948, we have seen our country besieged and attacked, our friends and relatives killed; we have been the target of terror on a worldwide scale; yet today, when every one of us has members of his family, students, and colleagues, at the front, we say that we remain ready for a peace process with our Arab neighbors. A peace process must mean mutual recognition, with peaceful coexistence as its goal, achieved by free negotiations. In the circumstances which have arisen, the secure nature of the agreed boundaries is, now more than ever, seen to be imperative. The nature of the territorial settlement will only emerge as a function of mutual trust.

We address ourselves to our colleagues, to students, and to men of good will all over the world in the hope that they will use their influence to the utmost to bring home to the Arab countries the demand of the world that the language of hate and vilification, and the dialogue of war, must be replaced by the dialogue of peaceful coexistence.

Signatories:

Shlomo Avineri
Joseph Ben-David
Ernst Bergmann
Aryeh Dvoretzky
Samuel Eisenstadt
Saul Friedlander
Natan Goldblum
Jack Gross
Yehoshafat Harkabi
Avraham Harman
Alex Keynan
Don Patinkin
Joshua Prawer
Michael Rabin
Nathan Rotenstreich
Gershom Scholem
Moshe Shilo
Gabriel Stein
Jacob Talmon
Ephraim Urbach
David Weiss

The above signatories are on the staff of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To the Country

Bette Howland

It so happens that my mother's oldest and dearest friend, Little Bertha, lives on a farm not ten miles from the summer cottage where my sons and I are staying in the country, and I hadn't seen her in fifteen years. At least. My father can't be dragged out to visit the Elliotts again for love nor money. My mother says he's still angry because he loaned Little Bertha's brother Bucky a few hundred dollars many years ago and never got it back. That's no surprise; everyone knows Bucky robbed his own mother. Actually they say he made her mortgage the house in exchange for favors a mother shouldn't ask. "So who tells you to go lending money to a crook like Bucky Klugman?" my mother will say. "You did," my father says. "You're always telling me what to do." "Since when do you ever listen to me?"

And they're off and running. Cheek to cheek.

There never was a time when my father didn't gripe about going to see Little Bertha and her husband Mark Elliott. My father is a big powerful man, almost inordinately strong, very handy; there's nothing he can't fix—or break, as the case may be. Wherever he goes people always have something for him to do, seem to be sitting around waiting helplessly for his arrival. He even used to get emergency calls in the middle of the night, like a doctor; a car stalled on the road, waterpipes bursting in the basement and they can't shut it off, someone in the john and the lock got stuck. It was nothing unusual. My father would zip up his pants and spit in the sink and off he'd go to the rescue.

But there was no end to the work at the Elliotts.' They regularly seemed to be starting from scratch. This new farm is only the latest in a long series, beginning with a half-finished house in the sticks, nailing up chicken coops in their muddy back yard. Peggy and Lynn were about the same age as my sister Slim and I; but no children of theirs were growing up in the city. They were determined to make the big break, become farmers, lead a country life.

Mark and Little Bertha both held down outside jobs—old Mrs. Elliott lived with them and kept house—and they were on the go from morning till night. Their chickens were succumbing to a million diseases. You'd find dead poultry stretched out in the mud like cold plucked bodies on a butcher's counter. They were having a hard time of it. But I didn't notice it then; I thought a hard time was what you were supposed to have. They kept my father busy from the minute we walked in the door; hammering roofs, blasting tree stumps. He'd mutter and grumble and blame my mother all the way home—the back of his neck burnt as a brick from the sun.

My father is certainly a man to carry a grudge (he doesn't speak to me half the time either), and he hasn't forgotten that Mark almost talked him into voting for Wendell Willkie. But I think the real reason he's reluctant to have any more to do with the Elliotts is that their lives have become so different from his. Mark and Bertha vote Republican, attend church, go square-dancing on alternate Fridays (how corny can you get?). And I gather they don't get into Chicago very often nowadays. Bertha was still full of some wedding they'd been to the last time, a big event. "Don't let me forget now—be sure and remind me to tell you all about that wedding!"

I GET the strangest feeling driving through this Midwestern farmland. The fields are flat under cultivation, the trees seem stunted by distances. Then you come upon a rise in the road; you can't see beyond it, the sunlight is striking the side of some lone whitewashed barn. And all at once there's the illusion, an unshakable conviction; you're not inland at all, you're on the edge of the ocean; you're about to confront it, to begin the descent to a wave-battered coast. You can even smell the salt water. People from the Midwest are crazy for the sea.

The two white houses sit side by side practically right on top of the highway, nothing else around but wires and posts and the white line on the blacktop disappearing over the crest of a hill. Lynn and the three granddaughters live right next door. It was easy enough to tell the houses apart. A tire swung from thick shady branches in front of the big old place; the kids' wagons and bikes leaned about the yard, and an Irish setter pup

BETTE HOWLAND, a writer living in Chicago, is the author of a book of memoirs, *W-3*, to be published by Viking in the spring. Mrs. Howland's previous contributions to COMMENTARY are "Public Facilities" (February 1972) and "Blue in Chicago" (August 1972).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with a long silky red coat started whining and licking at the fence as soon as it heard the car. The other house appeared to be still under construction. Blacktar insulation, sprawling rolls of chicken-wire, the grass muddy and trampled down like coconut matting. Glazier's marks scribbled on the windows. In other words, it was like all the rest of Mark and Bertha's houses; I would have known it in a dream.

Inside the same story; even the furniture was the same as it had always been—Sears Roebuck Early American, spinning-wheel coffee-tables, tie-back chairs, rockers and hutches of red rock-maple. Though it seemed the furniture was new and I was not rising to the occasion; for Little Bertha had to prompt me—looking up at me sideways—"I was glad about the rug."

It's because she's so short, she seems precocious; peering up at you, perkily, her head cocked to one side, the sharp corners of her mother-of-pearl frames tilting. Like an inquisitive child. And she talks a mile a minute, doesn't have time to catch her breath. The veins stand out in her neck; the words scatter so fast, you wonder how come they don't knock her right over. The hens in the barnyard, scratching and flapping, their plucky tails taking off in all directions, always seemed to me in a great hurry to get out of her way.

Mark and Bertha have gone back to their first love; the new farm is entirely devoted to the production of laying hens, 36,000 of them in the two long, white windowless barracks, the slitted air vents fluttering. It looks like a small factory with its towers and power lines; all their acres are in corn for chicken-feed. This is not the tender sweet-corn, white, almost transparent, wispily bearded, with even pearly rows. The stalks thrust forth coarse flourishing ears; spotted, rustling, growing like wild. There is a pond, a rectangular trough; you can still see the tooth-marks of the machinery that bit it out of the earth. A brown duck family skimmed its still surface, crows hung themselves on the hatrack of a naked dead tree. Flies snapped. Fields stirred in the sun.

Mark was in the chicken house, immunizing. He strode out in his baggy overalls, a red bandanna knotted 'round his neck, rimless specs flashing, stripping off his thick rubber gloves to shake hands. Right away I had a mental picture of him giving injections—reaching into the straw, feeling under warm excitable feathers (the way we used to, hunting for eggs)—rubbing alcohol swabs on downy white breasts. But of course things aren't done that way, not on the scale of a modern chicken farm. Everything is automated, mechanized, industrialized. The vaccine is in high-pressure tanks, sprayed into the air.

Almost immediately, Jacob, my younger son, made some remark about the high cost of living.

"Well now, that's only relative," Mark began, settling his cap. His broad square head had grayed. First thing in the morning, in the farm dark, you used to hear the most god-awful grinding and squeaking, Mark cranking the handle of his razor-blade sharpener. Now, without further prompting, he launched into a speech that seemed just as familiar. About growing up as the sole support of his family, a widowed mother and unmarried sisters. About how they were poor, but always had enough to eat. About how you're not really rich if you haven't got self-reliance, while the so-called common man can always hold his head high. About how it was the standard of living that had gone up, not the cost, for your basic needs are always the same. And that was what was wrong with the country today.

We stood on the heated door-stoop, listening. Flies like bits of metal, glittering in their mail, clung to gravelly trenches of chicken manure. It was too sudden, a little embarrassing. Little Bertha—no bigger than one of her own grandchildren in her ankle socks and sneakers—lowered her gaze as soon as Mark got started, blinking behind her big owlish white specs. If *I* was well-acquainted with this speech, she must have heard it ten thousand times.

It was this rock-ribbed conservatism that really used to get my father's goat—a factory laborer himself, a union battler. I can remember him bundling up to march off to the picket lines—two or three jackets, a couple of caps, scarves, earmuffs; padded against the cold and the baseball bats. He looked like the old lady at the newsstand, with her apron full of change and her cracked red hands. In his thick hair—it moved under his fingers like beaver fur—there was a small naked patch where a rock had beaned him; a scar on his back where he'd been stabbed. My point is that my father was not imagining things. And yet the real reason for Mark's lecture, the true nerve that had been touched, was something that reminded me utterly of my father—I had seen it in him so often. It was Mark's longing for male companionship. Someone to talk to. Mark is surrounded by women, has always, come to think of it, been surrounded by women, outnumbered by them. And now here were the two alert handsome boys—intelligent eyes amid thickets of hair—listening to him with upturned faces.

A steady muttering hum came from the exhaust fans of the chicken houses.

Twenty-thousand chickens under one roof, without light or breeze. The air was suffocating, it snuffed your breath out. You could see white feathers stirring in dim wire cages. Row upon row in long tiers, dark narrow aisles like library stacks. They were keeping up a racket in their cracked chicken voices, fussing and clucking; it sounded like the mutter of the exhaust fans—a continuous stifled protest, a sort of treadmill of dissent.

The conveyor belts moved silently.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The birds spend all their lives in these cages, they never go outside. Ideally, they never touch the ground. They are fed by conveyor belts, watered by conveyor belts; eggs are collected on conveyor belts. The latest installation had been a belt to haul away the manure we had seen piling up outside. Next—since one mechanical innovation begets the need for another—the manure will be chugged directly to the mill. Now it is being spread over the fields for fertilizer; then it will be ground up with the corn and fed back to the chickens.

Here and there a hen pecked tamely in the aisles, feebly almost, its red wattles trembling. Others were roosting motionless under the stacks. The birds get no food and water at liberty, can't last more than twenty-four hours if they fly the coop. Someone has to go around at night, collecting all the strays and putting them back in their cages.

Bertha was rattling off all this information, parts and prices, like a mail-order catalogue. She always sounds as if she's rattling off some lesson learned by heart—her head inclined, her fists clenched to her sides. . . . Everything in hock, mortaged to the hilt; the egg business in a slump, the cost of farm equipment skyrocketing. At that very moment disease was raging on the West Coast, flocks by the hundreds of thousands were being exterminated, farmers wiped out. An ice storm last winter had paralyzed the county. . . . In other words, it was the same old story; the old continuous struggle, the day-to-day, hand-to-mouth existence.

But there seemed something almost scandalous to me in these intimate disclosures, every detail of their livelihood.

"Excuse me, and maybe I shouldn't ask this," Jacob began—I knew what was coming, his black eyes were clicking back and forth like the beads of an abacus—trying to add up all these figures in his head—"But how much do you think all this cost you?"

"You'll have to ask Father," Bertha said quickly.

Old Mother Elliott used to put on a spread like nobody's business; her table was literally heaped with food, hills, valleys—her own churned butter, hot biscuits to melt it, vegetables green from the garden, raspberries black from the bush. Her whipped potatoes were out of this world—not to mention her canning and preserves. She had died a few years back, an uncomplaining invalid in an upstairs room. Little Bertha has never been the domestic type. She works on the assembly line of a factory in St. Jo, planting vacuum tubes in radios. You see a lot of aproned farm wives cashing their paychecks on Fridays in the supermarket. "It takes two working to live." Everything on the table, with its Sunday company cloth, the paper napkins folded tri-cornered under the forks, was from the grocer's shelves: convenience foods, packaged, canned, frozen. Diet soda, low-calorie salad dressings—for Lynn, who told me she belongs to T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly. She drives fifty miles to Kalamazoo for the meetings.) I had a sense of something diminished as we scraped out our chairs.

The packaged bread was still frozen stiff from the freezer, and Lynn's carrot-topped twins—sitting at the card table with napkins under their chins, wide spaces between their teeth—were warming the slices tenderly between their hands as we passed the plate.

Peg, the older daughter, was the one I used to play with as a child; but it turns out that Lynn is the one who is my age. People always said she had a "heart-shaped face," and it still is, just like a valentine. Grave gray eyes and pointed chin. The first day the family moved onto a real farm at last—horses, cows, tractors, the rough mangled roads of the country—Lynn fell out of the hayloft and broke both her arms. The next year she fell out of her bunk bed and broke them both again. I still remembered her up to her elbows in plaster casts. But in the meantime Lynn and Peg were learning to ride horses, to can, to bake, to sew; they belonged to Girl Scouts, went to Sunday School, showed prize animals at State Fairs. They were all-'round 4-H champions. They rose in the darkness and pulled on rubber boots to go wading in slippery barnyard manure, doing their chores. The big, soft-eyed, baggy cows, scarcely bothering to twitch their ears or glance behind them, lifted the tassels of their tails and shot out more. Mark and Bertha were getting their wish; their girls really were growing up on a farm.

Naturally there were a few embarrassing questions. "When are your parents coming out to see us again, it's been so long?" Mark and Bertha wanted to know. "And your sister, Slim, we used to get such a kick out of her. What's her husband do now?" (He locks himself in the bathroom and sits there in the dark till you leave, that's what he does. What my father calls "a character.") But conversation over the meal was mostly about farmers' dogs getting killed on the highway, a regular occurrence. Traffic has increased on these back roads; Lynn says she's afraid to let the children ride bikes. It's ever since they opened up I-84 and I-90; the green placards are everywhere, you can almost sense the rumbling rhythms of the truck tires, pressing onward.

Every once in a while a pick-up truck hurtled past and drummed the dishes on the table.

The very pictures hanging all about us were the same; oils, originals, they had belonged to Mark's grandfather. Nature scenes, woods, mountains, waterfalls. The thick raised brush-strokes shone darkly in heavy gilt frames. They still seemed arranged in the same order of ascendancy: I used to think the largest was supposed to be best, because it was biggest.

Mark noticed me looking. "Guess I ought to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

take 'em in and get 'em appraised one of these days," he said, raising shining specs to the wall. "Maybe one of the artists died and got famous." And that was the joke he always used to make.

Jacob spoke up. "I hope you don't mind my asking. But how much would you say all this is worth?"

"Well now. That's hard to say." Mark tucked his head over his plate. "I did most of the work myself you know."

"Just an estimate," Jacob said tactfully.

"I was going to tell her about *the wedding,*" Bertha chimed in.

Mark looked up. "What wedding was that, Mother?"

"Why the wedding we went to in *Chicago.*" She sounded rather hurt.

That did it. All you have to do is say Chicago. At once the conversation turned to crime. The streets of Benton Harbor and St. Jo aren't safe any more, deserted after dark; business districts are dead. Instead people go to huge outlying shopping centers, sprung up like oil-wells on the highway. Even social life has moved there; restaurants, cinemas, cocktail lounges, bowling alleys. Things have happened which never used to occur in this part of the world before: bodies locked in trunks, shoot-outs at gas stations, brutal murders, which even make the Chicago papers, so you can imagine the great splash in the local press, with the news of church bake-sales and false-alarm fires.

There was the woman who went shopping in Kalamazoo. Her car was abandoned in the parking lot. A few days later a hitchhiker spotted a grisly, blood-smeared infant sitting on the side of the road, prattling and pointing into the bushes. There they found the mother's body. In Cassopolis, a man and wife were slain in bed—tortured, throats slit. Once again, a couple of toddlers were witness to their parents' murder, standing in their cribs.

I could see Lynn took an interest in this gory stuff; she dramatized—pointing her finger like the infant in her story, opening her gray eyes wide in staring childish horror. I must confess I take an interest myself. My aunt was murdered when I was a very small child, a little more than two; my cousin—her daughter—and I discovered the body. She had been strangled, her apron-strings knotted so tightly round her throat they were hidden in its flesh. We thought she was fooling. We each grabbed an arm and started dragging and pulling to make her get up. Her arm was heavy, limp, it offered no resistance. For many years after I could remember her dead hand pulling on me, but thought it was a dream. My cousin moved away with her father and I never saw her again.

I KNOW that evil is the great preoccupation of our life in the city; I am used to conversations like this, I am very much aware of being a woman alone. But it surprised me to learn that it's the same in the country, that people talk about the crime, they are preoccupied with crime—and all that goes with it. Fear and violence are by-blows of our modern life. They feel this life encroaching, closing in on them.

The fear of crime is profoundly a class fear; the fear of becoming a victim, of joining the ranks of the expendables—those spewed up by the system; of offering your neck to be butchered and slaughtered and laying yourself down with the rest. I realized the extent to which this has come to pass when we were pulling into the city one day, getting off at the Illinois Central station on 55th Street. The little red train from the country arrived at the rush hour; it was drizzling, passengers were alighting from cars heading in the opposite direction, coming from the Loop. Steamy plastic raincoats, umbrellas, tired straggling lines trekking toward the gates. The stairs were wet and muddy. The tracks are elevated here, tumbleweed rolls off the railroad ties, down the steep embankments, blows sweeping through the streets of high-rise housing projects.

Something was wrong. You could see the crowd halting ahead at the very bottom of the stairs. A snarl, a back-up, someone blocking the way. Two youths were killed, shot in the head at this station one evening very recently while it was still light. So my first thought was "Oh no." But what it was was a cat. A large, bluish, white-spotted animal lying on its side, its paws stiffly stretched out. At first glance it appeared to be dead; then I saw its dark quivering gaze. It seemed to be trying to raise its head, glance backward over its shoulder. "Not for long," someone said behind me.

As we went out past the gates I could see through the bars the last of the passengers still gathered round, looking down at the cat, helpless to express their concern. And as a matter of fact it is a rarity to see an animal on the city streets in this condition. People you see in a bad way all the time. You give them a wide berth. All at once, through the bars, the cat became a man before my very eyes. I saw him lying on his side in the same stiff way, trying to lift his head up and look behind him over his shoulder with the same quaking motion. He was a black man in a black raincoat, with a bottle in his pocket; his fingers outspread, reaching. Was he supposed to be drunk? having an attack of some sort? had someone pushed him? was he wounded? had he stumbled and fallen? His eyes were shining and shivering like muddy pools of water. And the heels, umbrella-tips, were tap-tapping around him, passengers quickening their pace, avoiding his eyes.

Dawn, the oldest granddaughter, suddenly jumped up—toppling her chair backward, dropping her fork with a clatter. "Flaming Molly got out! Flaming Molly got out!" Pointing to the win-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dow. Her hair was about the shade of the Irish setter's, and her little gold locket was rising and falling on her chest.

Sure enough the big red dog came streaking past with its head between its paws and its long fine coat drifting like prairie grass. *Oh no! Not again! How'd that happen*? The twins shrieked and tore off their napkins. I gathered that Flaming Molly was not long for this world.

"Can the boys come help me catch her?" The three older children ran out, flushed with excitement, their footsteps jolting across the bare unnailed boards of the porch. In no time at all the meal had disbanded; Lynn marched the little ones home across the lawn, Mark went back to his chores. I started to clear the table.

"Never mind all that," Little Bertha whispered, quickly wiping down her hands on her apron. "Now's my chance to tell about that wedding."

We sat side by side on the sofa, the scrapbook spread open across our knees. I saw I was in for a fairly lengthy and detailed description, not to say history; how many years Mark and Bertha had known the bride's family; what good time they had made driving into Chicago; how they got lost, circling around, looking for the church. The organ was playing; the ushers were taking the guests by the elbow and leading them down the aisle to their pews. All of a sudden the lights went out, the room fell silent, a white movie screen dropped in place of the altar. Onto it there flashed—a naked, toothless baby on a bearskin rug! The groom! A microphone spoke out over the darkness —the voice of the groom's mother, telling to the accompaniment of slides the story of his life. The groom's first teeth; his baby-shoes—dipped in plaster. The groom in a cowboy hat, with strings 'round his neck, his little legs dangling from the back of a pony in Lincoln Park Zoo. And so forth and so on. Talk about history! The same with the bride; she had had corrective surgery on her hip as a child and even that was not overlooked—there she was on the screen, smiling and struggling with her casts and crutches. Her childish scrawl; her striped spelling-papers with gummed red stars.

Several of the groom's original musical compositions were played on the guitar, and the bride's poetry was read aloud. It was announced there would be an exhibit immediately following the reception line—a display of their arts and crafts.

I was stunned. I had been expecting a tale of hippies and flower children, bearded boys and bra-less girls, but what was one to make of *this*? And one had to make *something*—Bertha was looking up at me expectantly, her head poked to one side.

"It sounds like the bride and groom have a lot in common," I said.

She sighed. "Yes, I'm sure they'll have a wonderful life. But I'm just not doing it justice," she added, shaking her head. "It's too hard to remember it all, it's been such a long time."

"Say. When was this wedding anyhow?"

Bertha flipped over pages. "June fifteenth, nineteen ss—why! That's four years ago!" She shut the scrapbook and perched her folded hands on her knees, lifting her face wistfully. She clucked her tongue.

"My my how time flies," she said.

LET me tell you about this part of the country. At one time the southwestern shores of Lake Michigan thronged and thrived with summer resorts; most of my schoolfriends (though they lived in cramped flats with Murphy-beds in the living rooms) spent the entire summer vacation at Gottlieb's, Gettel's, Fiddelman's, in towns with names like South Haven, Benton Harbor, Union Pier. The towns still have the same names, but they don't sound the same to me. These were places above all of summer romance; my friends went, they met boys; they talked about Gary, Barry, Terry all winter. (The names of choice in my generation.) I didn't know anything else about life in the country and I didn't care about anything else either; I didn't grow up on the West Side of Chicago for nothing. I had no use for the outdoors, it made no difference to me—all I knew of nature was what dropped from the trees. What were those shiny, sticky things like black beanpods? And the soft chains we used to call "caterpillars"? And what about the leaves? What did you call them? I never learned their names.

My proletarian family did not go in for that sort of thing. When I was very small we used to make our annual expedition to the beach, something of an ordeal; you took the Roosevelt Road streetcar to the end of the line—forty-two blocks and it ground to a halt at every other corner—and then you walked another mile with the blankets and thermos bottles. The bath-houses smelled of damp rotting timber; you had to run through them very quickly, ducking the sniper-spray of icy cold showers. I wore rubber beach-shoes, a rubber cap, a suit with no top! My father would scoop out a hole in the sand and crouch down in it—his thighs as thick around as tree stumps in his Charles Atlas trunks—trying to shrink and make himself look smaller while someone snapped our picture with our black box camera. Otherwise his head and hairy shoulders would get lost above the rest.

On the long rides home Slim always fell asleep.

The streetcar was crowded, we had to split up; my father sat all the way up front with my fat little sister sprawled across his lap, his own big head nodding and dozing. My mother and I found a seat in the back. The aisle got more and more crowded, straphangers swaying; the car went slower and slower—dragging on, clanging, complaining. But it seemed to me that this was the way I spent most of my life: waiting. Waiting in buses, streetcars, automobiles; waiting on benches,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stairways, laps, and knees. Waiting in crowds, doctors' offices, clinics; waiting on beds heaped with rough coats at family parties. Waiting in the dark. Waiting alone. Waiting for nothing. This was the real tyranny of the adult world; I wanted to grow up and be done with waiting—just so no one ever again would have such power over me.

I laid my head against the back of the seat and my gaze drifted toward the window.

So how should I have known that I would grow up with such strange longings, such a passion for "nature"? That I should have been asking questions? That I would want to live tucked away in the country and to know the names of things?

THE boys and I share this summer cottage with a couple; we stay during the week, they come out on the weekends. An ideal arrangement, except I'm sore half the time. Someone uses your last clean towel, or eats up the leftovers you were counting on finding in the refrigerator; or, departing, my friends will go to great pains to close up the house, draw all the windows, shut it like an oven—but they forget to throw out their leaking garbage. The whole place stinks to high heaven and swarms with fruit flies.

Unwelcome thoughts enter my soul: walk right in and make themselves at home.

But I don't have to go into explanations, the case is simple. I'm too jealous, possessive about the house—I don't want to share it. I don't want to share anything. I want to pack up my children into a place of our own; a very persistent fantasy! I even subscribe to farm realty catalogues, so I can read all about the *Sportsman's Hideaways, Handyman's Specials, Sacrifices to Settle Estates.* (It occurs to me that these catalogues are my equivalent of the pictures on the walls at the Elliotts' house—calendar paintings—fir forests, sparkling trout streams. A-cottage-small-by-a-waterfall.) It doesn't have to be the best place in the world, nothing special, no castle, no dream house. Riding along I'll spot some austere and isolated shack—a roof, a porch, a weedstrewn path—and I'm ready to love it. To spring out of the car, fling my arms around it; twine myself, cling to it, sink my roots deep. If it will only be mine!

Too bad you can't feel that way about people.

Zimmerman's falls squarely into the category of *Handyman's Specials.* Mrs. Zimmerman and her husband staked out this land over forty years ago, and once owned all the cottages you see around here. Her husband is dead now, as she's sure to mention on every occasion, any time she corners you—a tiny woman with frizzy gray hair and great big tiger eyes, magnified, welling up to the very rims of her thick glasses: "My husband is dead now you know." "Yes yes I know." The tenants try to evade the old landlady's tediousness. But it's easy to understand. She feels diminished; she is not what she once was. This is not the truth about her—not the whole truth!

Most of the cottages belong to black families now, who live in them themselves and do not rent them out, and have put a lot of work into their places. Paint, shingles, cinder blocks; concrete patios, chain-link fences. Roofs straddled by TV antennas like Texas-towers—it still takes a lot of power out this way to get a picture. The rest—what's left of Zimmerman's Lakefront Villas (they're not on the lakefront, that goes without saying; you can't even see Lake Michigan from here)—are merely six or seven of the most leaning, the most dependent, the most run-down, crippled, and dilapidated. It won't be so easy to get rid of them! Which the old lady would dearly love to do all right; she longs to soar away and be free. Help is so hard to get these days.

Mrs. Z. swears up and down by Mrs. Hodiak, the cleaning-woman, who routs the cottages out in spring. Sweeps up the curled wasp-corpses, the mouse pellets, the fly-specked newspapers laid over the furnishings like wares in a shop-window—three-legged armchairs, sagging studio couches, dressers with stuck drawers and tarnished sour-pussed mirrors—stout and fearless with her mops and buckets. Her hair is like a paintbrush dipped in lampblack, still white at the roots. It was cold when we first came out and I foolishly asked how to light the rusty old heater; I've always been skittish about holding up flaming matches to hissing gas. Mrs. Hodiak without a word dropped onto all fours and crawled under the buffet. That's where the heater sits, don't ask me why. You could see her big bare sprouting legs and gym shoes sticking out.

"Never mind Mrs. Hodiak, please, forget it," I said, as she crouched, her heavy back wedged in, scratching matches under her thumbnails.

There was a pop, but nothing lighted. No explosions. Mrs. Zimmerman seems to be the only one left who still expects the heaters to give forth, rise and shine; the toilets to shut their noisy traps for a change and quit dripping deliriously (no more graceful fountains); the showers to do more than cough up a few drops of surly brown water, rattle their pipes, and knock it off. She seems so surprised and disappointed in fact—the big yellow eyes sweeping up, trustingly, in her small wrinkled worried face—that you really hate to mention it. Like the hole in the boys' bedroom ceiling where the roof is caving in. What's the use? What can she do about it? Or the bathroom floor rotting away under the tub? The screendoors of course are a laugh.

"Mrs. Hodiak scrubs these cottages from top to bottom, she makes them *spotless,*" the old landlady says with pride.

What it amounts to is this: Mrs. Zimmerman—by default—is a hold out, a survivor. I made it up here twenty years too late! But she still thinks someone is going to come along and take all this off her hands, and you can always tell when something's up, she's got another prospect on the hook.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

An old man—another ancient, faithful retainer, stooped, gnarled, with a spattered cap and overalls that hang drooping from their buckle-straps—shows up, bright and early, and starts slapping white paint all over the place. He speckles the greenery. He must be stone deaf under his cap; his portable radio jumps and jangles and blares like a loudspeaker. The lawnmowers buzz, riding herd over the grass; the garbage trucks back up, groaning and grinding and gnashing their teeth. The neighbors' miniature poodles (all the neighbors seem to own little white poodles which look like pipe-cleaners) sound off from their rhinestone-studded throats—abused little yips and yaps. Even the woodpeckers get into the act, typing away—hunt and peck—very unsystematic! In other words, life out here goes on—industriously. And it's not supposed to! It's supposed to stop, to hold still for us! Everyone knows that! Isn't that the proper definition of life in the country?

The tenants just wish she'd leave well enough alone.

This neck of the woods has always been a Bohemian stronghold in the summertime too, and it still is. The old resorts still gang up one right on top of the other, Hspuda's, Redimak's, Sixta's. The restaurants with thatched roofs and stencilled shutters; the dark little groceries where they sell shriveled sausages and heavy black bread and display all the mimeographed announcements—dances, raffles, Bingo. They'll cash checks if they know you. The strong community spirit definitely does not extend to outsiders. This is exactly the pattern the transition from white to black followed in the city—where all that dark bread comes from by the way, the husky loaves stickered with labels from bakeries in Bridgeport, Brighton, along Archer Avenue. These are the so-called "ethnic" neighborhoods—i.e., white working-class. Inch by inch the ground is contested in classic style; you read about bricks and fire-bombs hurled through windows, crosses burned on lawns, parents picketing schools. Everyone knows that Czechs, Poles, Lithuanians, Irish are more stubborn than Jews. At Zimmerman's, however, there are certain changes rung on these old stereotypes. Here it is the blacks who are the conventional, stable families, who own homes, who maintain them, who put up the fences and fire up the coals with lighter-fluid on their portable grills. The whites are academic-style Bohemians.

At seven o'clock in the morning Mrs. Bledsoe sitting on the screened-in porch across the way starts to give Byron his lesson in table manners. Mrs. Bledsoe is a round, brown, smiling woman who wears turbans, great dangling earrings wriggling like bait, long colorful robes. She looks like an African ambassadress—even when she throws out the garbage, the loose tropical sleeves flowing and fluttering, as she slams and bangs the lids. She takes in children from the ghetto to board in summer, so they can taste the benefits of country life: "And because I never had any of my own," she says. (She pronounces it "get-toe," in rich penetrating tones, to let you know it's not where she's from.) The little colony can be seen traipsing down the dusty path to the lake, Mrs. Bledsoe, her buttocks swaying in her long gown, forging ahead; the children scraping along in rubber thongs, striped beach towels over their shoulders. Later their wet suits hang on the line. Byron is the youngest, the puniest; the skinniest, blackest legs, the biggest ears; his belly slopes and pokes out the most. He wears a yellow beanie with something like a windmill or weathervane on top. When the others tease him, don't let him catch the Frisbee or take his turn at bat, he chases back and forth; frantic; I see the weathercock whirling on the top of his head.

I get very maudlin about Byron's yellow beanie.

"Don't slop your oatmeal, Byron."

"What you say when you ask for something, Byron."

"And what you say when you get it. You. Byron."

I think she slaps his hands. The light of the young morning creeps across the dewy grass. But this is not exactly what I bargained for when I rented a house in the country; not the twittering of the birds in the trees. It makes me cringe. I feel it is partly on my account that Mrs. Bledsoe is making Byron's life so miserable, that he keeps getting it day after day like this. And it *is* partly on my account; her voice rises, carries sharp as a laugh—it means to be overheard. *Byron! Byron!* The other childern titter—who can blame them? A moment of freedom for them. They're not even permitted to go barefoot, Mrs. Bledsoe's so strict: "It looks trashy." Whose world does she think she's making them fit to live in?

Our porch—we took this cottage for its screened-in porch, though it's in even worse shape than the rest—is full of garbage. Belle and Emile save all our trash so they can take it to the recycling center at the Bethlehem Steel Plant; that is their hobby. They belong to Zero Population Growth. They own two houses and three cars. (No, four; I gave my car to Emile on condition he never mention it to me again. It was the kind of car you have fantasies of abandoning; the man who sold it to me must have thought he had died and gone to heaven when he saw a sucker like me coming, with my great big smile.) Our refuse isn't enough for them; they go around collecting from other cabins too. Tins, jars, soda bottles, beer cans, great green jugs of Gallo and Pio Vino, stashed all over the place. Shopping bags buckling under their loads. Stacks of Sunday papers, comics, and Rotogravures. Then there are the ecological experiments; piles of browning corn-cobs, rheumy watermelon rinds.

They know how I love to throw things out, so they leave notes for me:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Please save. This is not garbage."

That's not all. I nearly forgot the dishes of dog-chow, boxes of kitty-litter. Belle and Emile have three cats and two dogs. It would be no fun driving them all back to Chicago in the rear seat of a rusty Volkswagen, so the cats remain with us. Large, placid, easygoing Belle with her big hips and pale pony-tail, her long teeth like a rabbit's, straps herself in—stroking the old white dog on her lap. The young dog waves its lofty tail from the window. And out pops Emile's wedge of red beard, anxiously reminding us—just one more time:

"Don't let the cats get out!"

Don't let the cats get out. The cats are shy and strange and keep trying to run away. We have to shut them up whenever we attempt to leave; they hide from us, bound off, dive under the furniture; their tell-tale eyes glare from dark corners. One is black and white, fat and sleek and easy to catch; but Jacob spends a lot of time parked on narrow haunches, lifting the edges of blankets, poking his head under beds—the thick shocks of bushy dark hair sticking out aft—coaxing the starved striped tabbies.

"Here kitty kitties . . . here kitty kitties. . . ."

Frank and Jake are of an age and have always been close; being shunted around—their father and I were divorced when they were babies—has made them closer. Frank is thirteen now, he's pulled ahead; broad-shouldered, gruff-voiced (Arf! Arf! Arf)—almost hulking! His wrists protrude from the sleeves of his pajamas and the pants-legs look as though they've shrunk on his ankles. Nobody notices these developments with more interest, more awe, than Jacob. Their father has married again, he has a new wife, a new baby. I wonder if the boys feel at home there? Are they only guests in his house? Maybe they are on their good behavior, or there are things they are afraid to say? And isn't it the same for them with me? Mine is a makeshift sort of life; I didn't plan it that way, I just don't have all the pieces. I'm sure they notice. Do they watch out? Do they bite their tongues?

"I'm always at home where Jacob is," Frank told me.

At first the boys played with Ralphie, a big heavy shuffling good-natured kid with a cowlick, and calamine lotion smeared all over his fat red cheeks. He'd gotten into some poison ivy. His hand was in a sling, taped to the wrist, the thumb in a splint and just the fingernails sticking out; a firecracker had gone off in his mitt on the 4th of July. He limped a little, lurched to one side—an ankle twisted falling out of a tree. The boys assured me he was just accident-prone.

Then Jacob started asking. "Hey Ma, is it all right if we sneak off after lunch and go fishing with Ralphie?" "Do we have your permission to sneak off after dinner huh Ma?"

"Sure. But who sez you have to *sneak off*?"

"Ralphie does. His mother's punishing him. He's not supposed to leave his room except to go to the toilet. But he climbs out the window."

Ralphie's mother is Gladys, a schoolteacher; once widowed, once divorced; out here with her mother and five children. The oldest son is dead in Vietnam. Gladys is a blonde meaty woman with a ruddy, thick-blooded face; the old mother is bony and scrawny and white as a ghost. And yet the two women are unmistakably of one flesh; it's the way they carry themselves—six feet tall, with heavy slouching shoulders. Bison humps. It gives them a hangdog, defeated appearance; you can see they are used to being ineffectual. Ralphie's "punishment" is typical; the threats fly thick and fast and no one listens to them anyway. "All right, I'm gonna leave you right here then," I hear the old woman telling the baby—sitting and bawling in a puddle in its diapers and pins, digging its fat little fists in its eyes. "You'll have to find your way back to Chicago all by yourself."

And yet it was Gladys who finally forbade Ralphie to play with my boys—because, she said, they used foul language. Then the two rosy little girls had to stop playing with their friends for the same reason. Very soon there was no one left who had not offended in this way, and Gladys's brood had no one to play with. On the beach she spreads their blanket far from the rest, and passing in the road she won't glance up, keeps her distance—humped, slouching, her feet pounding with determination, her chin hung forward with a touch of pride.

You may be sure I enter into the spirit of things, narrow my eyes, set my jaw too. Hard feelings are so good for the arteries.

SOMETHING knocks off the lids of the garbage cans and scrapes and scratches in the middle of the night. What can it be? A fox? A masked raccoon? Everyone is secretly pleased with this creature, which is to us what the bears are to Yellowstone, ambling in under the tent flaps and eating up the peanut butter. When I hear it I jump out of bed and go scrambling for the flashlight, searching the darkness for a pair of eyes burning like taillights.

How long since I smelled summer nights in the country? The air is sharply pure, your breath cracks; beech trees creak overhead like old weather-beaten barns. Mosquitoes sprinkle in the grass thick as the dew. The Little Dipper reminds me forcibly of childhood—gazing up at the pinpoints of light, sitting up late on our front steps. Belle took her class of inner city dropouts to the planetarium, and the kids clapped politely when the stars came out.

And what if the animal is only a rat? A cat—escaped? One of the neighbors' toy poodles with their jewelled collars and red ribbons? (No wonder they protest so much.) Or it could be Sadie, up to her scavenging and rummaging.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everyone knows better than to start up with Sadie—hard enough to avoid her as it is. You wake up and find her face thrust darkly against the screen, her hand to her forehead, peering in. An old harpy head, streaked white bangs and beetling black brows. They are always twitching. "Just sniffing your flowers," she says. She knows every abandoned house for miles around—she's looted them all. Prowling the woods in helmet and slicker, galoshes and thick gloves, got up like a beekeeper.

Sadie comes trudging down the loose rickety stairs to the beach—someone's going to do himself a mischief one of these days—her black rubber galoshes flopping their tongues, swathed to the chin in a conspicuously bright beach towel. Very conspicuous—it's mine! I was wondering what happened to it. It's wonderful though how everyone puts up with Sadie, the price you have to pay for a little fresh air.

Gladys lives on the other side of the same duplex (seven of them in two rooms), so the women have been carrying on a running feud. Naturally you hear everything through the cardboard walls, and Sadie is forever thumping on them with her broomstick. I was talking to Sadie in back of the white frame cottage when Gladys came charging 'round the bend, her head lowered, very red in the face.

"All right Sadie, I give up, I can't take it any more. I'm here to beg you—is that what you want? Beg you to stop it."

"Stop what?" says Sadie, not at all taken aback (as I was), but raising her glass to her lips. She was seated in a deck chair, drinking white wine out of a shrimp-cocktail jar. All around us fresh odors of scissored grass.

"Stop swearing at my children!"

"They swore at me first."

"Sadie! They're children!" Gladys's voice was thick, deep in her throat; she was choking back tears.

"They started it, I didn't."

I'd never seen Sadie so composed. She sank back calmly in the arms of the striped chair, stretched out her legs—one ankle in its rubber galosh crossed atop the other—looking up at Gladys, her black eyebrows raised above the rim of her glass. And they weren't even twitching; her nervous tics had disappeared, stopped like a clock.

"I beg you Sadie, leave us alone. What harm have we done you? We try to keep out of your way—I shush my children all the time when you're at home. Why do you have to make my life so miserable!"

Gladys's face was getting thicker and redder. All at once I understood—not a moment too soon, considering I'm in such a good position to appreciate—looking at her hunched shoulders, swollen angry jowls. A cornered creature, at bay. One husband dead, one divorced; a son killed in the war; five unruly children, a nagging mother—a life of constant reproaches. She was beside herself leading a manless, unconsoled existence; the fear, managing alone. And of course pride.

Sadie smirked and sipped her wine.

I got up and took Gladys by the arms. "Come away, come away Gladys," I said. "Can't you see she's enjoying this? She loves it, she thrives on it, this is what she lives for. You're no match for her. It can only hurt you."

"All I ask is a little peace," Gladys said. She had begun to cry in earnest and her big sunburned peeling shoulders were shaking.

I put my arms around her, meaning to press her cheek to my shoulder. But since she's a good half-foot taller than I am, that was impossible. So I put my head on her shoulder instead.

"Why can't we have a little peace and quiet?" she cried. "Why oh why does it have to be so hard? I come up to the country with my children to get away from all that. But it's just the same here. Why do I feel this way? Why am I always so angry?"

She rocked and sobbed while I patted her on the hump, mindlessly, like burping a baby. If not for Sadie! For the damned cats and the garbage and kitty-litter! If Mrs. Bledsoe would just quit picking on Byron—in the tender hours of the morning at least! If only we could remove all these extra distractions. . . .

And yet in spite of everything the first thing that happens when you get to the country is that everyone starts talking and scheming about giving it all up, moving out here altogether, living here year-'round! They've had it with the city—dirt, crime, crowding, corruption. To the country! To the country! It's only a matter of rearranging the querulous details, our circumstantial lives.

So where is it then? Where is the rightful life that is awaiting us? Where is this undiscovered territory? Where the air is clear and consciences are clean? How do we get there? How do we cut our path through this wilderness? How do we run up our flags and stake our claims?

The tyranny the tyranny of these dreams of peace and quiet.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Poet of the Holocaust

Robert Alter

May it never befall you,
All you who pass along the road!
Look about and see:
Is there any agony like mine,
Which was dealt out to me,
When the Lord afflicted me
On His day of wrath?
—Lamentations 1:12

THE relation of Hebrew poetry to the Holocaust is a peculiar one, largely because many readers and some writers of Hebrew poetry tend to have rather special expectations of it as an instrument of response to national calamity. The old tradition of Hebrew poetry as a vehicle of prophetic burden has not entirely been dissipated, despite the aesthetic preference of most younger Israelis and the practice of most Hebrew poets below the age of fifty. In regard to historical disaster, the paradigm of the biblical Book of Lamentations remains especially potent. Composed, one may still assume, in the immediate aftermath of the conquest of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E., it records the horrors of bloody defeat in a heavily cadenced accumulation of grim, concrete images, setting history in the deepening perspective of divine purpose; and the book has become with the passage of time the focus of a national rite, solemnly chanted in a minor key every year on the Fast of the Ninth of Ab. After the model of Lamentations, each major persecution from the massacres of the First Crusade onward elicited its own *kinah,* or dirge—usually drawing heavily on the language and symbols of Lamentations, Jeremiah, and the Midrashim about the destruction of the Second Temple—and these in turn often became part of the official liturgy for the day of national mourning.

It is, I think, this long chain of historical precedents which particularly fostered in Hebrew circles a dim sense that poetry should be able to yield some sort of definitive account of the Holocaust, a reverberant evocation of its terrible meaning under the aspect of eternity. Now, this expectation was based on two obviously anachronistic assumptions. To begin with, it presupposed the possibility of meaning in the face of such events, assuming by constraint what the author of Lamentations could assume quite naturally, that a higher plan was unfolding through history, however ghastly some stages of its implementation might be. The second assumption was that it was still possible for a poet to submerge his individuality in a collective identity, as Hebrew poets for three millennia had done, and thus to speak for the whole people in its historical anguish. In point of fact, the overwhelming direction of Hebrew poetry in recent decades has been toward a concentration on private and quotidian experience, toward the cultivation of a nuanced personal voice, and, as in other modern literatures, toward the affirmation of selfhood, not peoplehood, as the proper sphere of literary expression. Given this fundamental tension between classic Hebrew precedent and contemporary poetic practice, it is a serious question whether there can still be any convincing alternative to the prevalent modern stance of the poet as the explorer of his own experience.

Among Hebrew poets in our time, the one great exception that proves—in the proper sense, tests—the rule is Uri Zvi Greenberg. Greenberg, born in a Galician village in 1894 and a resident of Israel since 1924, is such a thorough maverick, such an uncompromising extremist in all his aesthetic and ideological positions, that there is a strange sort of integrity in the very purity of his oppositionalism. His politics are on the far fringe of the messianic Right: he worked as an organizer and publicist for the Revisionist movement in the 30's; during the 40's he was active in the terrorist Irgun; he seems to entertain the notion of a restoration of the Davidic dynasty as something more than a poetic conceit; and he has denounced as backsliders and traitors all who lack his singlehanded dedication to fulfilling the manifest destiny of the Jewish people, which is to triumph by might over its historical enemies, Christianity and Islam. There is hardly any point in debating Greenberg's political views; what concerns me is how these views have determined his posture as a poet, how far they are compatible with what readers not sharing his outlook might perceive as good poetry. Let me say at the outset that I think there is real poetic genius in Uri Zvi Greenberg. It is precisely the presence of genius that makes it worth considering how, given his commitments, he has used or abused his gifts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Though much of Greenberg's earliest Hebrew poetry (he had written first in Yiddish) was intensely personal and showed conscious affinities with European expressionism, he began to insist as far back as 1924 on the obligation of the poet to serve as the voice of national destiny in the making and to eschew at all costs the arid aestheticism of the Gentiles. By 1928, he was calling for the emergence of a Hebrew Walt Whitman (with himself clearly in mind), Whitman being conceived as someone grander than a mere individual poet, the bardic singer of a nation's soul. Special dispensation could be made for a poet like Whitman as having been "molded from the clay of a Hebrew prophet," but in the same manifesto Greenberg declared an absolute difference between Jewish and Gentile creativity: "The foreign peoples have nine muses, but ours is the tenth, the hidden muse: Judaism with all its aspects in the light of messianism." As the political crisis in Palestine and in Europe grew graver through the 30's, Greenberg pursued his own declared program more and more vehemently in his poetry. He was in Poland on a mission for the Revisionists when the war broke out in 1939, and was barely able to escape and make his way back to Palestine. Then, as the tide of mass murder rapidly engulfed what had been for centuries the teeming centers of European Jewry, destroying, among millions of others, Greenberg's parents and sister, he began to produce the enormous poetic outpouring of wrath and anguish that would become *Streets of the River: The Book of Dirges and Power* (1951).

Streets of the River is at its best a strong book, indeed, a deeply disturbing book, and one that is strenuously intended to resemble nothing so much as itself, or the earlier poems of its author. Not surprisingly, it was seized on in the years following its initial publication—the Hebrew original has been reissued several times, though an English edition has not yet appeared—by a good many Hebrew critics as the awaited inspired text on the Holocaust, the authoritative utterance for our traumatic times of the prophetic voice in the language of the classical prophets. Now, over twenty years after the appearance of the volume, a more sober appraisal seems warranted. The scale of the book, its originality, and what must be called the grandeur of its conception, clearly still set it apart as the most substantial poetic response in Hebrew, perhaps in any language, to the destruction of European Jewry. In these 385 pages of verse—lyric, dramatic, narrative, balladic, and hortatory—there is poetry that one can guess many generations of Jews will continue to live with, compelled by the mesmeric force of Greenberg's vision of genocide and regeneration. Nevertheless, what is likely to strike a reader at this distance from the events and the composition of the poems is the yawning gap between achievement and failure in the same poetic structure. On the one hand, many of the poems have a delicate, hauntingly poignant lyricism or dazzling moments of hallucinatory power; on the other hand, there is page after repetitious page of doggerel and rant, conveyed through hollow rhetorical flourishes in mechanical rhythms and rhymes, or, alternately, in sprawling free verse. This startling discrepancy seems to me worth exploring because I think it may reveal something about the intrinsic problematic of making poetry respond to an ultimate historical horror.

Greenberg means not only to record the immediate pain of a people's bereavement but to bring to bear on it a transhistorical perspective, which is to say, to fit the historical suffering of the Jews into a large structure of myth. The people of Israel is seen as a great irreversible river-tide flowing out of Abraham—his name, *Av Ram,* is etymologized as "High Father"—across the centuries, past the green banks of the alien Gentile world. Its fate is to be hated and persecuted, its divinely appointed destiny is to prevail triumphant. Abraham is "the lord of law, vision, and yearning," qualities which are presumed to be the unique legacy of Israel. Greenberg repeatedly emphasizes blood as the medium for the transmission of this heritage, and his view of history is frankly, defiantly, racist. Humankind is divided into two irreconcilable groups: the seed of Israel, which bears within it the gifts of true belief, compassion, lawfulness, and the Gentiles, who are by the necessity of their inner nature ravening forest beasts, showing at best only the deceptive veneer of civilization in a Beethoven, a Goethe, or a Kant.

It hardly needs to be said that this drastic polarization of humanity does considerable violence to historical fact, however much Jews have suffered at the hands of Gentiles, but, again, the question I would like to pursue is not the tenability of Greenberg's beliefs but what kind of poetry he makes out of them. In any case, *Streets of the River* is shot through with contradictions within its own mythic version of the Jews as the unique people of mercy and refined spirituality because the militant poet lays great stress on the most primitive, vengeful layers of the Bible as the basis for renewed Jewish existence. Even rabbinic Judaism tends to be translated back into the fierce ethos of the most archaic passages of the Bible, as in the chilling moment when the poet, in the presence of his murdered father, recites the following benediction, taking off from the rabbinic formula for a blessing said before the performance of a divinely enjoined act: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the World, who sanctified us through Your commandments and commanded us to take blood for blood, life for life."

To be fair to the quality of Greenberg's achievement, one must say that the visionary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strength of his imagination is such that within this skewed framework of myth he is able to create images of the Holocaust as a cosmic event that are utterly compelling. Let me cite just one example from many possible ones, an apocalyptic moment that occurs in the opening poem of *Streets of the River:**

It is not the morning star ascending in the east.
Look, brother,
It is a skull, a Jew's skull, whose skin has been stripped,
Still in its fresh redness burning brightly
As in the Creator's thought before the creation of man.

It is the last line here that provides the special Greenberg twist, wrenching horror into a perspective of theological grandeur, joining death with birth, annihilation with creation. For the most part, however, it is in those poems which emphasize most directly the grand myth of Jewish history that one feels Greenberg's greatest lapses as a poet. Not to belabor the point, I will offer just a half-dozen characteristic lines from a long poem called "Song of the Great March." Prosodically, the lines have a Whitmanesque rambling quality for which Greenberg shows excessive fondness, and which itself has the effect of encouraging in him a tendency to prosy expository statement:

Here we are now, the Jews in the world, with all that land of killing going 'round in our hearts.
An army ancient of days, but weaponless, its flags torn, wound-dark, pain-heavy,
And without commanders to go before it, experts of distance, adept in maneuvers. . . .
We are all an army that persisted in battle though battered, our souls like our flesh stricken with stillness,
But our will to live, to come back to reign as we reigned, from field to sea, fortress, and wall,
Has not been battered in battle, not subdued by the sword, nor yielded to the teeth of despair and pain.

Poetry places far greater demands on the imagination than ideology in regard to the perception of complexity and variety, and what one senses here, as in many extended passages of *Streets of the River,* is that the verse medium has been reduced to a rumbling vehicle for an ideological message. Part of the trouble is that we know too much about Jewish history through its various and ambiguous course for this to carry much conviction, and one suspects that even an extremist like Greenberg, in some corner of his consciousness, knows too much about Jewish history really to be able to imagine it adequately, concretely, in this melodramatic image of an embattled army. There is something at once hackneyed and vague about the handling of the whole military symbolism, and Greenberg, as though finding himself deprived of his better poetic resources, resorts to facile word play (which I have tried to imitate at a couple of points in my translation) and to stringing together political slogans ("our will to live, to come back to reign . . .").

THE underlying problem of confronting the Holocaust by means of a myth might be stated in another way. The essence of historical experience, as Philip Rahv has persuasively argued, is constant change and innovation, while myth by its nature implies cyclicality, timeless repetition. To render history as myth, then, is to violate the essentially multifarious character of history. This is precisely what Greenberg does. Again and again he insists that Jewish history, from Abraham to Auschwitz, is a single repeated tale of persecution and persistence. In all times and places he sees the same enemy in a thousand different masks, "The same implements of torture, the same cellars of terror." Amalek, Assyria, Babylonia, Rome, Spain, and Portugal, the medieval Germanic states and modern Germany, are equally "the terror itself without trope or simile: there is nothing else, it's all of them." It is putting it mildly to say that there is a flattening and simplification of the facts of Jewish history in this vision of them. One of course must grant lines of continuity in this body of history, but the awful uniqueness of the Holocaust itself is diminished by its being set at a dead level with all previous tribulations—as, for example, when the furnaces at Auschwitz are equated with the furnace of Ur of the Chaldees, the latter being strictly an invention of rabbinic legend in which Abraham was tried and found steadfast, and surely belonging to a drastically different world from that of the Final Solution. What it is possible for a poet to imagine credibly about history depends in part on his own location in history. For the Psalmist or for the author of Lamentations, the coordinates of knowledge of a whole culture made it natural to see historical events falling into a neatly traceable pattern of recurrence, or of ebb and flow. In the middle of the 20th century, to insist on such a pattern means willfully to impose a cloudy generality on the commonly perceived multiplicity of historical experience; and, on the level of poetic style, this leads to exhortation instead of evocation, to vagueness, contrived allegorical tableaux, stylistic clichés, and mere ideological catchwords.

A final problematic aspect of this attempt by a modern poet to create a national myth in his work is the kind of *persona* that addresses us through the poems. In fact, as we shall see, there are two very different *personae* in *Streets of the River,* roughly correlated with its successes and failures, but the one Greenberg consciously wants to be prominent is precisely the sort of speaker

* The translations throughout are my own.—R.A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that a national myth would seem to require—an authoritative voice of the genius of the people through the ages, thundering dire warnings, trumpeting affirmations. The poet of *Streets of the River* presents himself as a prophet and castigator, as a consuming fire of truth, a lonely, sharp-toothed panther among the complacent fools of his generation. At moments, he has flashes of real poetic megalomania, as when, at the climax of one vision, he announces, "And the wall/Of mighty existence collapsed before the sun of song."

To point to the extravagance of all this is not to question its sincerity; nothing is sincerer than fanaticism, and Greenberg often seems close to that condition. The more crucial consideration is not sincerity but authenticity, which is a matter not only of the speaker's expressive intention but also of how that intention can be received and construed by others in the specific cultural and historical context for which the poem was created. When the prophet Amos walked into the central square of Bethel and began denouncing the ruling elite of the Israelite kingdom, he was acting in a concrete context in which it was thoroughly credible, though also rather dangerous, for a man to speak poetry as the direct message of God. When a modern poet like Greenberg assumes an analogous posture, most of his contemporaries, not sharing the assumptions of his poetical faith, are likely to perceive such writing as an extreme act of grandiosity. The subtle, profound operation of rhetorical credibility upon which all literary authenticity depends then breaks down, the prophet in his own eyes having become a pompous preacher in the eyes of others. Though we may read in general by a willing suspension of disbelief, the writer has to make it at least feasible for us to effect the suspension.

I WOULD suggest that in most cases the only workable way to use biblical materials for the expression of contemporary experience is somehow to stand the sources on their heads, borrowing images, symbols, and situations for the expressive needs of a very different kind of poetic voice. Let me propose for a moment a contrasting example to everything I have been considering so far in Greenberg, both because it is instructive in its own right and because it may provide a useful perspective on the other *persona* of *Streets of the River*. Amir Gilboa, a generation younger than Greenberg, is also European-born; his whole immediate family in the Ukraine was murdered by the Nazis; and, understandably, his Hebrew poems through the late 40's and 50's reflect considerable preoccupation with the Holocaust, though they remain distinctly personal poems, and he has never attempted a sustained poetic work on the subject. I might add that stylistically Gilboa moved from a tendency to excessive ornateness in his earliest verse of the 40's to a distinctive kind of cultivated simplicity. The poem I would like to cite, "By the Waters of Babylon," is a radical reworking of Psalm 137, which begins with those words. It reassembles principal elements of the psalm—the sitting and weeping by the waters, the hanging up of harps on the willows, the mockery of the captors—in a new order of meaning which is, from one point of view, a vivid image of the predicament of the bereaved poet in a world of holocausts.

On the willows we hung our harps. I mean the grown-ups.
As for me, I had a little harp and I hid it under my cloak.
On the far side of the river the victors lit fires and wild with joy they reveled.
Evening fell and fell. The grown-ups sat crying. A big fire over there.
And the guards assigned to us, not taking part in the dancing,
Reviling us out of impatience, raucously,
Aping our language in grotesque ways.

The grown-ups listened, and looked at their harps. The waters filled with tears.
And I out of sorrow dared to cry out: Who is grotesque here,
You wild beasts, and how can you mock us with gibberish?
For there is no language like ours for color and sound, for depth and distance.

And they laughed louder, their mouths gaped at me.
They began chasing me, getting entangled in darkness.
I would stop to rest a brief moment briefly to pluck my harp,
They would swell like sacks, glow like copper.

This is, of course, rather strange, but the strangeness seems to me arresting and suggestive. By casting himself in the role of a helpless child menaced by cruel captors, the poet closes the distance between himself and the biblical scene, making it pulse with the immediacy of a contemporary event, despite the archaic harps. The wavering of the language between a child's speech and formal poetic diction helps create this bridge, as do the rapid shifts in verb tenses, which move from past to present to an imperfect that is a virtual present. What finally drives the child, as the poet's surrogate, to distraction, is the enemy's vilification of his language, which seems to him a very precious thing, a unique reservoir of expressiveness. In the face of brutal historical disaster, the poet has only the resources of his art to cling to, but in the end these may amount to no more than the pathetic plucking of harpstrings by a frail figure resting for a moment in desperate flight. Gilboa, like Greenberg, feels the distinctive beauty and crystallized cultural experience of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hebrew that is his instrument, but "By the Waters of Babylon" precisely reverses the idea of poetry's overwhelming power which is celebrated in *Streets of the River.*

The child seems a particularly plausible *persona* for the poet confronted with the Holocaust because helplessness, fear, impotent rage, incomprehension are such likely responses to that unassimilable historical reality, at least when a writer tries to imagine it personally and concretely, not ideologically. Gilboa in fact uses the child as *persona* in a number of remarkable poems in which biblical figures are appropriated for contemporary purposes. I would like to quote just one of these, before we try to see how all this bears on Greenberg, because it is such a striking illustration of just that quality of poetic authenticity to which I have alluded. The poem, "Isaac," represents Abraham and Isaac on the way to the sacrifice, with one crucial alteration of the original story; but its first-person narration by a child Isaac breaks down partitions between present and past, waking and nightmare, and projects through the prism of the biblical scene one of the most concentrated images of the Holocaust's sheer senseless horror that any Hebrew poet has fashioned.

At daybreak the sun took a walk in the forest
Together with me and with Father,
My right hand in his left.

Like lightning a knife flamed among the trees.
And I so dread the fear of my eyes facing the
blood on the leaves.

Father, Father, quick save Isaac,
Then no one will be missing at lunch.

It is I who am slaughtered, my son,
My blood even now on the leaves.
And Father, his voice was stopped up.
And his face was pale.

And I wanted to scream, writhing not to believe,
Tearing open my eyes.
I awoke.

And the right hand was drained of blood.

Now, if one turns back to *Streets of the River* with the example of Gilboa in mind, one sees the strategic importance of the fact that over against the patriarchal-prophetic stance of the poet who calls himself *Avleshonram,* Father of the High One's Tongue, there is another speaker, an orphaned child lost in the world and aching for his parents. Though there are some significant exceptions to this general rule, it is by and large those poems of Greenberg's in which the child is speaker that most fully persuade us of their authenticity as responses to the Holocaust. Even the language in these poems is for the most part noticeably different—not high and hortatory but generally simple, dramatically direct, finely modulated, rich in concrete imagery. Despite Greenberg's dedication to the Tenth Muse of messianic purpose, he has included poems in this volume which are not only highly personal but which are no more than obliquely related to the destruction of European Jewry. Intertwined with the subject of the Holocaust is a mourning over a lost childhood, which occasionally is even cast in "Wordsworthian" terms as a universal experience of deprivation that has no necessary connection with the murder of the parents and the devastation of their world. In "Man Dies in the Valley," a poem that provides one of the conceptual keys to *Streets of the River,* Greenberg imagines every human being descending by stages from infancy's mount of beatitude, where a Jacob's ladder stands by the crib, to a dark valley at the bottom of time, where the exposed child needs his mother terribly but will never find her: "As the cradle days of childhood pass/ The little ladder vanishes,/ The angels of childhood vanish/ Unnoticed. . . . A stillness,/ Like after the playing on strings."

On close consideration, a peculiar paradox emerges from *Streets of the River.* The emotion consciously intended by the poet to inform this large imaginative structure is fiery wrath, but the most convincingly realized emotion in the book—perhaps its deepest feeling—is nostalgia. In this regard, the role of the mother, and the anguish of separation from the mother, are crucially important, as, indeed, they are in much of Greenberg's poetry both before and after *Streets of the River.* It is only a little overstated to say that the sense of reality in Greenberg's poetry radiates out from the remembered image of the mother. Idealized but also often delicately eroticized, she is the poet's one abiding model of a meaningful, happy connection with things outside himself. (The father, though also portrayed lovingly in many of the poems, is less central and more ambiguous, sometimes appearing as an Abraham sacrificing his son or as a proponent of the ways of exile/emasculation symbolically taking away his son's sword.) No other woman, the poet tells us several times, can give him the joy and beauty he knew at his mother's breast. In one poem the adult poet, sitting in a bar in Tel Aviv, sadly contemplates his body and wonders how it was once caressed by a mother, gently lifted up by her to the *mezuzah* each night and then laid to sleep in that long-vanished home. Indeed, some of the finest moments in *Streets of the River* are imagined returns to the home in the Galician village, filled with vividly recollected details. Everything in these scenes becomes intensely real because the poet's imagination can focus around the felt reality of loving closeness to the mother. The sham reality of adult experience, scarcely to be credited or honored, falls away, and the palpable substance of living existence is, at least for a fleeting moment, recovered.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I do not want to suggest that the subject of *Streets of the River* is only ostensibly the Holocaust and that the book should really be read as a kind of Hebrew *Prelude,* a study of the tragic growth of the poet's mind. On the contrary, it seems to me that the recurrent stress on the universal human loss of primal harmony is precisely Greenberg's most effective means of making the loss of European Jewry accessible to the imagination. This does not of course imply that the prolonged trauma of "descent" from childhood is in any way commensurable with the horror of a political force that with carefully coordinated administrative and technical machinery could gas and incinerate several million innocent human beings. That horror, however, remains ultimately impenetrable, for all our elaborate attempts to analyze it as being everything from banal to diabolic, because the very idea of its possibility reduces all we would build in our lives individually and collectively to rubble. To impose upon the Holocaust in a long series of poems some large symbolic scheme must to some extent falsify our perception of it by trying to elicit an eschatological clash between evil and good from facts too abysmal for any notions so traditional, so implicitly hopeful. What the poet is likely to find more within the reach of thought and feeling artfully ordered through language is not the horror itself, not the broad workings of history by which it came to be, but his own sense of loss and consternation after the awful fact.

To the Jews as a people, the element of irrevocable loss is bound to be particularly salient for the obvious reason that the whole variegated cultural world, from the Volga to the Garonne, from which a large part of living Jewry derives its values, its distinctive identity, and its physical parentage, was in less than six years destroyed for all time. In *Streets of the River* the loss of the parents flows directly into the loss of the world whose exemplars they are for the poet. The inevitable estrangement from the realm of childhood is of course made overwhelmingly sharper, more anguished, by the cataclysmic destruction of everyone who belonged to that realm, and the poet's personal bereavement becomes a concrete, imaginable instance of the bereavement of the entire people.

The laments over the precious world of childhood lost are more than exemplary, for in them the poet succeeds in achieving on a small scale what elsewhere he does rather less convincingly on a more grandiose scale—the creation of a myth to give emotional coherence and dramatic definition to the experience of loss. This myth works, I suspect, because its *dramatis personae* are figures intimately known and felt by the poet, now enlarged and made luminous as they are interwoven with strands of legendary lore and set in a timeless perspective. The murdered mother, father, and sister become a kind of Holy Family, undergoing through martyrdom a celestial Ascension, concentrating in their transfigured presence all the beauty that was cut off, all the felt pain of their separation from the surviving son. In one of these personal visionary poems, Greenberg imagines the celebration of a ghostly Sabbath in heaven, his mother standing protectively over the naked, bloodied figure of his sister, who seems to be purposely confused with the Sabbath itself: "The heavens are hushed . . . and so one can hear the sound of stars whispering/ Like coals of fire murmuring Aramaic:/ *Betulta Kadishta Shabbat Malketa.* Holy Virgin Sabbath Queen." The ingenious device of the Aramaic line makes the image sound like something straight out of the *Zohar,* but in fact there is no *Betulta Kadishta,* no Holy Virgin, in classical Jewish sources, and the seemingly Kabbalistic mythic figure is a direct borrowing from Christianity. This minor detail is worth noting because it points to the fact that the indigenously Jewish character of Greenberg's poetry is not quite so "pure" as he would lead us to think, and in a similar way, the personal impulse in this book is stronger than we might initially conclude from its insistent national emphases.

One of the lyric peaks of *Streets of the River* is a group of four poems entitled "Songs at the Borders of the Heavens" which finely etches the family myth. In the first poem of the group, the speaker sees his martyred parents sinking into the watery depths, then ascending, on both sides of the setting sun, with the burning sea beneath their feet. The second poem moves from sea-changes to mysterious sea-crossings, and here the particular details of the poet's recollected image of his parents are especially prominent. The poem, called "Silence's Martyrs," is a beautiful example of how the artful rendering of personal anguish can reach beyond itself. The extraordinary delicacy of the language and the plangent musicality of the verse regrettably resist translation, but even in my awkward English version one may get some sense of the poem's quiet strength. If at first glance there seems to be a climactic note of self-pity at the end, the pathos of abandonment has a special resonance, a special justification, precisely because profoundly implicated in the first-person singular of the poem is a first-person plural, the orphaned poet intimating through the dramatization of his own plight that of the orphaned people.

In a poet so imaginatively involved as Greenberg with the historical destiny of his people, at some point the distinction between personal and national obviously breaks down. Nevertheless, one may learn something about the possible relation of modern poetry to national experience from the fact that the most convincing expres-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sions of the fate of the people even in this supremely nationalist poet seem for the most part to come in his most intimately personal poems, like "Silence's Martyrs." One must imagine the poet as lost child, after the Holocaust, standing on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean looking to the west and north into the great empty kingdom of death:

On the moonlit nights my martyred mother says
To my martyred father:
When I gave birth to the boy the moon dropped
by in the window.
At once he opened his eyes and beheld her; since
then
Her brightness has sung in his blood till this day
And the moon has been walking since then in
his poems.

Much never-stilled longing there was in my
father,
But the magic coach never stood by his house
When he longed.
And so he knew silence and melody
And loved-with-his-eyes the wings of birds.
—"When they want to fly, off they fly, just like
that."—

But my mother . . . her longing was hitched to
the magical coach.
By the beat of the heart every cell of her knew
how to walk
With both feet on the sea:
By the path-of-the-moon-on-the-waves
To me, to her son, in Zion—
But she would not find me in wait at the shore,
She'd go back with the path-of-the-moon-on-the-
waves:
Weary of wandering, feverish, seastruck.

Now, both my mother and father are silence's
martyrs.
There's a path-of-the-moon on glittering waves
And an only son
The remaining one
In the world.

Commentary Subscription Form

Please enter a subscription immediately:

☐ Six months—$7.00 ☐ Check enclosed
☐ Twelve months—$12.00 ☐ Bill me
☐ Three years—$32.00 ☐ New
☐ Five years—$48.00 ☐ Renewal

(note: outside U.S.A.—add $3.00/yr.)

TO:
NAME: (please print or type)
ADDRESS:
CITY: STATE: ZIP:

If a gift—fill in recipient's name above, your name here.

FROM:
NAME
ADDRESS:
CITY: STATE: ZIP: BA

(Please use separate sheet for additional subscriptions)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Working Critic

Jack Richardson

SINCE the publication, some thirty years ago, of *On Native Grounds,* Alfred Kazin has been an important, working critic of American literature. By "working critic" I mean that he has held criticism to be a profession that, when called upon to demonstrate its skills, attends to the tasks that the times present to it with the dispatch necessary to meet deadlines and with the self-assurance needed to overcome the practical difficulties of writing for publications of widely varied literary standards. Indeed, if one must single out one of Kazin's critical virtues as preeminent, one would have to select his ability to adapt himself to the occasion at hand and never to affect the apologetic or diffident attitude with which so many literary critics defend themselves when caught in the popular marketplace. In an essay that appeared originally in this magazine, an essay entitled "Writing for Magazines"* and written as an homage to Chekhov's ability to produce, without labored self-consciousness, the occasional piece, Kazin stated his attitude toward this form:

> Perhaps because one is read on Monday and can be forgotten the same day, there is an art in being inconsequent, an art which avoids the crashing and rhetorical final note, the art of appearing as light and easy as in one's heart one knows a "piece" must be.

Only those who know how much anguish and complaint can be occasioned by the writing of an article or a short piece of criticism can appreciate how liberating such a notion as this can be, and although I would question the use of the word "inconsequent," I feel that the sentence I have quoted could serve as a motto for all who derive some part of their living from the attempt to write entertainingly and critically on diverse subjects.

Of course, like all mottos, this sentence needs qualification when used as a guide in the practical world. If one spends a good deal of time subjected to what passes for critical writing nowadays, one might feel that there is indeed a superabundance of articles and essays that are easily forgotten in a day, that are so light, easy, and truly inconsequent that they betray not so much an aversion to punditry as an inability to penetrate any subject in a manner deeper than that which is produced by a facile opinion and a coquettish style. From the sixty-second television *aperçu,* with its puns and one-liners, to the antic excesses of the quarterlies with their often too ingeniously imaginative celebrations of new and "popular" culture, there is more than enough evidence about today to make one feel that the light-handed and the light-headed have become synonymous and regnant virtues, and that any need to call for their celebration is superfluous.

In the case of Alfred Kazin, one understands, since he is intelligent and cultivated, that when he uses the words "light and easy" he is calling for something quite different from the quick slapping together of a judgment in the manner of a journalistic reviewer. He is, rather, defending that aspect of criticism which deals with the immediate, which takes on works of art that are good and bad, important and trivial, complex and obvious, and which judges and analyzes them in a manner that permits itself the use of certain assumptions about art and life without those assumptions necessarily being stated in the piece of criticism itself. It is in the nature of such criticism that it not probe *too* deeply into its object—indeed, in most instances, such probing would be ludicrously unwarranted—and that it not expand too far beyond the subject's boundaries and enter into large formal and social considerations. Within these limits, however, a great deal can be accomplished.

If the critic writes well, there will be the pleasure of watching enjoyment or outrage turn into an exquisite coherence that, although compelling in itself, also has the practical use of giving us more ways to talk about and consider our literature. Though the working critic may not be too detailed about what he has come to value in culture, he nevertheless, through his tone and allusions, can inform us that he is not writing *in vacuo,* that he has deeper reasons for condemning or praising than the exigencies of his form allow. It is such intellectual pervasion that converts a review into criticism, and although it is an indefinable element, the intelligent reader appreciates and recognizes it when it is genuine and deplores the affectation of it when a reviewer, hoping to rise above his station, begins to quote, analogize, and in other ways air his specialist's knowledge in an unbalanced and obtrusive way, providing undigested gobbits of opinion and erudition. Finally, the yeoman critic reminds us, through his craftsmanship and constancy, that literary commerce need not always be a rare, sublime exchange, that it can have about it a quotidian practicality which, if nothing else, makes the reading of books seem an unforced social activity.

Such is the type of criticism

JACK RICHARDSON *is a playwright and our regular theater critic.*

* July 1960.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

most of us who write with any regularity for journals try to practice and it is the type in which Alfred Kazin has excelled over the past three decades. One need only read through *Contemporaries,* a collection of pieces of criticism that first appeared in such magazines as *Harper's, Atlantic Monthly, Partisan Review,* COMMENTARY, etc., to realize that Kazin belongs in the first rank of those who can make concise, informative judgments of writers which ferret out their intentions and idiosyncrasies with the easy authority that comes when someone is both passionate and knowledgeable about the reading and writing of books. These short essays in *Contemporaries* have the vitality of the direct, uninhibited response to works of art, yet they are infused with habits of analysis which subtly earn for the critic his right to a point of view. In his "The World of Saul Bellow," for instance, Kazin admonished those who saw in the author of *Augie March* and *Seize the Day* a tough, urban realist whose writing contained much that, in Kazin's phrase, "seemed a dull and gritty naturalistic catalogue," and quite rightly pointed out that Bellow gives the most commonplace details in his writing a *persona* that is far from naturalistic and is actually intellectually designed to present a dramatic complement to the fateful actions of his characters and their speculations about how to live life, endure death, and face destiny. In short, Kazin was one of the first of Bellow's critics to understand how much he was attempting, and he stated this understanding in a way worth quoting for what it says both about Bellow and about Kazin's critical method:

> But a novelist is defined not only by his mind, his style, his address; he is defined as well by his ruling subject, the idea of drama that is his obsession, by that point of view which is not only the content of his work but also its truly driving and unconscious side.

Later I will come back to Kazin's notion of a "ruling subject," but for now I will only say that it has served him well as an interpreter of modern fiction, allowing him to pierce through the often willful camouflage of the contemporary novelist and to uncover his particular concern.

I have been speaking of Kazin's ability to work as a front-line critic, someone who deals with the books and ideas of his time in a way that demands quick, concise explication and judgment. But he has also another, more scholarly attribute that, combined with his critical sense, produced *On Native Grounds.* I am speaking now about his sense of literary history, or more precisely, American literary history, which he used to trace the interactions of our society and its literature through the first four decades of this century. *On Native Grounds* still is, to my mind, the best guide to America's post-19th-century literary evolution, a guide that includes everything from the chronicles of long-forgotten, hermetic literary squabbles to the thrust of social realism and aristocratic symbolism into the educated consciousness of America. With this first book, Kazin very clearly presented us with the substance of his critical interest, with his firm belief that literature is enmeshed in society, that it is not an exotic pastime for connoisseurs of verbal sensibility but a vital, tangible force that should be the fiber and bone of a culture.

In the section of *On Native Grounds* entitled "Criticism at the Poles" Kazin did battle with both the Marxist critics who had made literature a useful historical tool and the aestheticians of the New Criticism who wished to make literature a self-contained item that was fit for little else but speculative, analytic study. In retrospect, the type of Marxist criticism he inveighed against seems hardly worth the effort of a refutation; the new semanticists, because they were intelligent and adept in their science, were another matter. Critics like Blackmur, Empson, and Burke were making indisputable contributions to our understanding of the creative method, and Kazin, though suspicious perhaps of their assumptions, nevertheless admitted their value. But he also saw what to him was a danger that far outweighed whatever insights they were giving the world about the nature of poetic "signs" and "ambiguity." It was the danger of the technician absorbed by method and forgetful of human ends and purpose. Thus Kazin wrote:

> The Marxist critics were scientists; but this was a science perpetually talking all around the object, a science that could disclose every insight relevant to the making of literature save why it was important to me.

Why literature is important to men was what *On Native Grounds* was all about, both as criticism and as history, and it was natural that someone writing, so to speak, a scholarly evaluation of the accuracy of Whitman's "Democratic Vistas" should feel a certain animus toward the sort of literary analysis that, through its professional requirements and insistence on intellectual specialness, made Whitman's egalitarian artist seem a contradiction in terms.

That the New Critics concentrated most of their energies on poetry and either openly disdained the novel or considered it too uncomplicated a form—James, Flaubert, and Joyce excepted of course—for their delicate instruments to be expended on, was certainly another cause for Kazin's antagonism. For although he has written in his career upon practically all modes of verbal expression, Kazin has always been on his surest ground and at his critical best when the novel has been his subject. He has again and again, explicitly and implicitly in his writing, announced his faith in this form as perhaps the best and most meaningful way to come to some sort of understanding with life, to experience it in a distilled yet expansive enough fashion so that personal vision and general recognition coincide for a time and create what we call artistic truth.

IT WAS this faith, coupled with Kazin's aforementioned historical sense, that made one expect *Bright Book of Life,** a study of the American novel since World War II, was going to be a work of high

* Subtitled "American Novelists and Storytellers from Hemingway to Mailer," Atlantic-Little, Brown, 334 pp. $8.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

criticism, a work that would allow Kazin to pursue in detail and at length the nature of fictional narrative and the worth of its recent embodiments in America. Yet even if one expected less, *Bright Book of Life* must be called a failure, and a failure that is in no way magnificent. Although in a brief foreword Kazin states that notwithstanding the publication of certain chapters of his book in magazines over the past years, *Bright Book of Life* is intended to be an "integrated account of the fiction written in the United States since the outset of World War II," it is in reality no more than an uninspired outline of writers and their themes, a series of flaccid explanations of novelistic attitudes whose only claim to integration is that one man had the temerity to put them between the covers of a book. It is hard to be so brutal about one's disappointment in a work from which much was expected, but it is harder still to understand what Kazin had in mind when he delivered this book for publication.

To give an idea of the level and originality of insight that runs through *Bright Book of Life,* I will quote from the opening chapter on Hemingway, a chapter that, in effect, tells us that when Hemingway lost his faith in the power of *le mot juste* to order life he became a symbol of literary despondency:

> This severe modernist aesthetic, this faith in a conscious perfectibility through the right ordering of words, was the property of rebellious privileged children of the upper middle class. Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos, Cummings all had the strongest possible sense of the breakdown of *their* moral inheritance—"you are all a lost generation"—and of their own exceptionality and luster as individuals.

It is this sort of no-nonsense statement of the obvious that is one of the faults of *Bright Book of Life.* But there are others, far more significant, that tend to vitiate even the critical qualities that Kazin possesses, qualities about which I have spoken admiringly. Here I return to the notion of a ruling subject, a notion that is fine and proper for the workaday critic who is under an obligation, since he is often confronted with the new or misunderstood, to discover first what a writer's commitments are. However, it is a barren enterprise for a critic to grind his way through the *Weltanschauungen* of some forty-odd novelists, especially when he can do no better than throw Ralph Ellison, William S. Burroughs, Donald Barthelme, and God knows who else together under the heading "The Absurd as a Contemporary Style." Instead of telling us that such and such is the way a certain writer looks at the world and forcing him to sit among others with vaguely similar concerns, the critic's job in a book of such ambition as Kazin's must be to investigate how that point of view and the art objectifying it can be shown to be vital and meaningful, not only in terms of the writer's success or failure in handling a theme but in terms of the history of the art he is practicing and the history of the society he is living in.

But hard judgment, which Kazin has proved himself capable of in the past, is almost totally absent from *Bright Book of Life.* The sharpness with which he dealt, for instance, with Salinger and John O'Hara in earlier essays has become muted, replaced by the desire to fit them into a category and to understand their way of looking at things and the manner in which they represent aspects of our society. Updike, Styron, and Bellow receive long admiring analyses followed by odd, little slaps on the wrist. On Updike: "All he lacks is that capacity for making you identify, for summoning up affection in the reader . . . ." On Bellow: "Bellow's more lasting fictions will probably be those whose personae are not *exactly* as intelligent as he is—*The Victim* and *Seize the Day.*" On Styron: "But the narrative [*The Confessions of Nat Turner*] is so dreamlike that we cannot really believe this man has been a slave and the organizer of so many killings."

Now Kazin seems to consider these as nothing but codas to his symphonic analyses, but the reader may be forgiven if he is slightly taken aback at the casualness with which Kazin drops these cool remarks about writers he is busy putting into historical perspective. In the case of Updike one is entitled to ask what kind of writer it is that produces neither affection nor identification in his reader? The answer is—a bad or trivial one, and one would like to know how Kazin could find so much to admire in such basic deficiency. If Bellow's two shortest works are going to be the "more lasting" of his *oeuvre,* does that mean that *Augie March, Henderson, Herzog, Mr. Sammler's Planet* suffer from some flaw deeper than their admittedly loose form and overweighted intellectuality? Or is it that they are too closely tied to the problems and details of our present world for posterity to take much enjoyment from them? Has Styron really failed as a novelist with the most important character he attempted, and if so, is it a failure of craft or of intellectual courage?

That Kazin never even considers questions like these as he skips along from writer to writer indicates that he perhaps has too much faith in the novel, that he believes that its existence is an indisputably good end in itself. It is a pleasant faith to have, but it is a pity that this perfect opportunity for an apologia by one of the few critics capable of zealous cogency was missed. Neither a random collection of sharp critical pieces nor anything like the literary history practiced in *On Native Grounds, Bright Book of Life* strains itself and our patience in the attempt to integrate our postwar literature, to find some idea with enough cohesive force to warrant an index that contains the name of almost every well-publicized novelist now writing in America. But there is no such idea to compel our attention in this book, not even a passionate bias that might at least shed some light on Kazin's assumptions when he is judging the worth of his contemporaries. All in all, an odd book, written by a good working critic who seems to have made a great effort to find the precise meaning of "inconsequent."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Two Conductors

B. H. Haggin

THE context I find necessary for an evaluation of Pierre Boulez and Michael Tilson Thomas begins with the remarkably perceptive statement Bernard Shaw made at the age of twenty: that the "highest faculty of a conductor" was "the establishment of a magnetic influence under which an orchestra becomes as amenable to the baton as a pianoforte to the fingers." I would apply the word "essential" rather than "highest" to the faculty cited by Shaw: it is the one required to give effect to the others. A good piano presents built-in tonal capacities to the fingers capable of realizing them in the beautiful or brilliant sounds the pianist puts together in his performance. But the sounds a conductor puts together are those provided by the playing—and thus by the capacities and efforts—of the hundred or so musicians of his orchestra; which means that facing the orchestra at the rehearsal or the concert with an idea in his mind of the sounds he wants, he must be able to get these hundred musicians to produce them. And the movements of his baton or hand that communicate to the players what he wants of them at every moment derive their effect on the players from the magnetic power Shaw cited. Certain famous conductors of the past—Mahler, Nikisch, Toscanini—exercised extraordinary power of this kind; and Toscanini's was described to me by the musicians who experienced it as uncanny.

Just as there are pianists with powers of virtuoso magnitude in the manipulation of their instrument, there are conductors who demonstrate such virtuoso powers in the obtaining of extraordinary playing from an orchestra. A historic example of this was described in the late George Szell's account of the impact which the New York Philharmonic's concerts with Toscanini in Europe in 1930 had on the Central European musicians and music-lovers who had for years been hearing the celebrated Berlin Philharmonic, Leipzig Gewandhaus, and Vienna Philharmonic Orchestras perform under Weingartner, Nikisch, Richard Strauss, Bruno Walter, and Furtwängler:

> This was orchestral performance of a kind new to all of us. The clarity of textures; the precision of ensemble; the rightness of balances; the virtuosity of every section, every solo-player of the orchestra . . . set undreamed of standards literally overnight.

And just as there have been the occasions when Vladimir Horowitz has excited his listeners with sensational displays of piano fireworks that distorted the shape and falsified the expressive content of the music, and on the other hand the occasions when Vladimir Ashkenazy or Van Cliburn has used his mastery of the piano in the service of distinguished musical insight and taste—so there have been such occasions involving conductors and orchestras. The final concerts of the New York Philharmonic's 1930 tour were given in London, where the great English critic W. J. Turner had written a few months earlier about a performance by Furtwängler with the Berlin Philharmonic:

> These extraordinary pianissimos, these marvellously manipulated accelerandos, ritardandos and crescendos can absolutely get in the way of the music when they are all produced for the sake of effect, as a piece of showmanship. . . . On this occasion [Furtwängler and his orchestra] were quite obviously displaying their virtuosity to the disadvantage of the music.

But after a concert of the New York Philharmonic with Toscanini Turner wrote:

> No conductor I have heard has succeeded in achieving such virtuosity and in keeping it always subservient to a purely musical intention.

Concerning this musical intention Turner added: "The basis of music is rhythm . . . and what a beautiful, clear, and vital rhythmic structure Toscanini made of Haydn's symphony!" And after the Beethoven series in which Toscanini conducted the BBC Symphony in 1939 Turner wrote that Toscanini's "grasp of the musical structure of the work he is conducting is unique," and that "one of his greatest virtues is his subtle variation of tempo, but always in the service of shape, and the shape is derived from the rightful expression of the music. It is in discovering this rightful expression and hence the perfect shape that Toscanini is supreme among living conductors."

To the foregoing paragraphs describing the powers involved in conducting, and the exceptional powers of a Toscanini, must be added one further statement of Turner: that with full recognition of the merits of conductors like Nikisch, Weingartner, Strauss, Walter, Furtwängler, and Klemperer, he considered Toscanini to be "a unique phenomenon." I add it because of one feature of a Toscanini performance that was in fact unique: the joint operation of his powers appeared to be controlled by a mental governor which held them to the accurate achievement of the absolutely exact rightness of statement one heard from the first phrase of the work until the last. This was something I had experienced only with him, and expected not to experience when he was gone; and so it was astounding, in January 1949, to hear a similar exact rightness, similarly achieved by powers as extraordinary as Toscanini's, in the performances of young Guido Cantelli, in whom Toscanini found a continuation of his own musical self: "I love this young conductor," he exclaimed delightedly. "I think he is like me when I was young." This continuation, however, ended suddenly in 1956, shortly after Toscanini's retirement, with Cantelli's death in a

B. H. HAGGIN, *the distinguished music critic, is the author of* The New Listener's Companion and Record Guide *and* The Toscanini Musicians Knew. *A collection of Mr. Haggin's essays,* A Decade of Music, *has just been issued by Horizon Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plane crash; and there followed the famine years—of Bernstein, Munch, Ormandy, Szell, Leinsdorf—in which nothing was heard that even resembled the "unique phenomenon" that had been experienced for many years with Toscanini and briefly with Cantelli.*

But in the spring of 1966—impelled by what Stravinsky had written about Boulez's conducting—I attended a concert of his with the BBC Symphony; and though I had expected to be impressed by a conductor who had impressed Stravinsky, I was unprepared for what I actually heard: the special, unique operation on what I would call the genius level, as distinguished from what is achieved by excellent conductors, that I hadn't experienced since the performances of Toscanini and Cantelli. I heard, that is, the marvelous sounds of strings and winds in marvelously clear textures and perfectly shaped progressions, the extraordinary precision of ensemble execution, the absolutely exact rightness of statement, that revealed Boulez's possession of an ear for orchestral balance, a sense for continuity and proportion in shape, a power of magnetic compulsion exercised over the orchestra, and a mental governor exercising control over him.

With this momentous and exciting fact of Boulez's singular powers as conductor and musician the concert revealed another fact of importance to the musical public: that he chose to devote these powers to the performance of a special limited repertory of the 20th-century music that interested him as a composer—a composer, as it happened, of some of the century's recent far-out music. The program of this concert ranged from Debussy's *Images* to excerpts from Alban Berg's *Wozzeck,* Webern's Six Pieces Op. 6, and Boulez's own *Doubles*; and though the programs of his guest engagements the next few years with the Cleveland Orchestra and his two guest engagements in 1969 and 1971 with the New York Philharmonic did include a few works of earlier centuries that I will speak of in a moment, they continued to offer chiefly music by Debussy, Stravinsky, Ravel, Schönberg, Berg, Webern, Bartók, Ives, Varèse, Messiaen, and Pousseur. Moreover, while this music included a few of what the general musical public regards as the century's great classics—the climactic masterpieces of Debussy's fully developed orchestral writing, *La Mer, Rondes de Printemps, Ibéria*; the young Stravinsky's astoundingly original *Petrushka* and *Le Sacre du Printemps,* his delightful *Pulcinella*—it included the much larger number of works by the other composers that I think most of this public finds as meaninglessly ugly as I do (except for Berg's *Wozzeck,* whose distorted vocal writing and discordant orchestral context do make the expressive sense of the nightmarish drama). And to the great examples of Debussy's late orchestral writing Boulez added *Jeux,* a boring succession of the mere mannerisms of that writing; to the young Stravinsky's masterpieces Boulez added, on the one hand, his ugly and uninteresting Symphonies of Wind Instruments, and on the other hand the old Stravinsky's Requiem Canticles, one of the pieces that resulted from his belated involvement with Schönberg and Webern, which are as ugly and meaningless as those of Schönberg and Webern. As for the few works of earlier centuries, broadcasts enabled me to hear Boulez's superb performances of Mozart's *Posthorn* Serenade and Piano Concertos K. 453 and 467, Beethoven's Symphony No. 2, Schubert's Symphony No. 5, Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Symphonie Fantastique* with the Cleveland Orchestra; his Philharmonic programs in 1969 included a group of Purcell's string fantasias and Haydn's Symphonies Nos. 89 and 91; the ones in 1971 offered excerpts from Gabrieli's *Symphoniae Sacrae,* Schubert's Symphony No. 6, excerpts from Berlioz's *Beatrice and Benedict,* and Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.* And it was interesting to note in these choices the avoidance of the major symphonies of Mozart, the dramatic and grand symphonies of Beethoven and Schubert, the symphonies of Brahms, the various orchestral works—symphonies, suites, ballets—of Tchaikovsky, the engaging earlier Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4 of Mahler.

I have gone into these details of programs because a conductor's value to music-lovers is not only in how he conducts but in what he conducts—which is to say, what he makes it possible for them to hear. Art-lovers can see the great art of the past whenever they like at the Frick Collection or the Chicago Art Institute or the National Gallery in Washington; but music-lovers can hear only the great music of the past that is performed by the Boston Symphony or New York Philharmonic or some other orchestra. And in the years when subscribers heard programs that ranged from the classics of the 18th century to those of the 20th, with an occasional new work of a contemporary composer as a novelty, these orchestras performed what could be regarded as their proper museum function. The Frick Collection was not browbeaten into replacing its old masters with canvasfuls of Campbell soup cans and the other recent types of pseudo-art; but the New York Philharmonic did yield to the pressures of the music-of-our-own-time polemicists in its programs; and Boulez, one of the most vocal of these polemicists, was allowed programs for his guest engagements that reversed the old formula—programs predominantly of 20th-century music, most of it the music of the radical innovationists which the general musical public finds ugly and meaningless, with the occasional work of Haydn or Schubert as the novelty.

A Philharmonic subscriber could accept one such program of a remarkable conductor if the other programs of the series satisfied his one simple requirement—that they make it possible for him to hear the music, old and new, that he was interested in hearing, as the museum made it possible for him to see the paintings he was interested in seeing. But it turned out—when Boulez was made musical director of the Philharmonic in 1971 and had the task of planning the programs not just of his own concerts but of all the concerts of the next three seasons—that the sub-

* See my "In Memory of Guido Cantelli," COMMENTARY, January 1968.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scriber's one simple idea was not among the numerous ideas about the Philharmonic's programs that Boulez disclosed at his first press conference in January 1971 and in an interview with the English critic Peter Heyworth a few months later. One major idea he revealed at the end of his Heyworth interview: he had, he said, accepted the Philharmonic post, and the similar post with the BBC Symphony, in order "to create models of concert life . . . in London and New York," by which he meant "conditions in which the music of our own time is once again an integral part of concert life." This was to be achieved not at the Philharmonic's subscription concerts, but in the two new series of concerts outside of the subscription series: "Prospective Encounters: 7-12," four concerts in a small hall at which programs of contemporary chamber music performed by members of the Philharmonic under Boulez and other conductors would be preceded and followed by discussion involving performers, composers, and listeners; and "Informal Evenings," two concerts in a small hall at which Boulez would conduct the Philharmonic in works (in 1971-72 works of Berg) that he would discuss and explain and answer questions about. These two series—like Boulez's *Domaine Musical* concerts in Paris in the 50's—were set up for the people interested in "the music of our own time," in accordance with the belief which Boulez expressed to Heyworth—that just as people in London who wanted to see Titian could go to the National Gallery and people who wanted to see Klee could go to the Tate, audiences with different tastes in music should be given the possibilities of hearing the different programs they wanted to hear, and it was wrong for orchestras to put a contemporary piece in a program of classical pieces.

This was admirable good sense, which, however, Boulez didn't adhere to in his programs for the Philharmonic's subscription series: he did put pieces by Nono, Ligeti, Maderna, Eliott Carter, Schönberg, Berg, Bartók, Ives, Varèse, Ruggles, and Riegger into programs of older repertory works. And he damaged the programs further, from the subscribers' viewpoint, with other ideas of his that represented interests and attitudes different from theirs. The ordinary listener approaches a piece of music very much as E. M. Forster—at the Harvard Symposium on Music Criticism in 1947—said the critic, the professional listener, should:

> [Criticism] has two aims. The first and the more important is esthetic. It considers the object [i.e., the work of art] in itself as an entity, and tells what it can about its life.

Boulez, on the other hand, is concerned with what Forster said was the second and subsidiary aim of criticism:

> the relation of the object to the rest of the world [e.g., other works of art] . . . the influences which formed it (criticism adores influences), the influence it has exercised on subsequent works. . . .

For the Philharmonic subscriber, who listened to a piece of music in and for itself to perceive what he could of its life, a good program was one in which each of the works had such a perceivable life that made it worth listening to; but for Boulez, who "adored influences," a good program was one in which the works—even uninteresting works—demonstrated such relations among them. A good museum, he said to Heyworth, exhibited not only Rembrandt masterpieces but "other paintings of the same period that form the background to his work and help you to understand more precisely why that particular work [of Rembrandt] is a real masterpiece"; and for the same reason one had to perform Telemann as well as Bach. But actually the greatness of a masterpiece of Bach like his D-minor Clavier Concerto is apprehended directly, and solely, from that concerto, not from anything outside of it—not even from the other clavier concertos of Bach, and certainly not from a boring work of Telemann. Boulez was mistaken, then, in thinking it was necessary for the Philharmonic audience to be bored by Telemann's work in order to be excited by Bach's D-minor Concerto; but he had the power to act on his mistaken idea; and so the Philharmonic subscribers had to listen to the Telemann work and be bored by it.

This lack of interest in the individual quality and effect of the particular work, and concern instead with relations between works, produced Boulez's opening statement in the Heyworth interview, about not wanting to give a series of concerts that were like so many menus of which one remembered particular works or performances, and wanting instead "to give each season a profile" which listeners would remember: "Ah yes, that was the year of so and so." This was one reason for the "retrospectives" of certain composers' work that he planned for the Philharmonic seasons; and at his press conference he had, the *Times* reported, given another reason for them: "Museums . . . always have masterpieces on display, but they also arrange special exhibitions devoted to a big painter, an important period, special phases of art. . . ." The Philharmonic's 1971-72 season would, then, offer a retrospective of the music of Berg, which Boulez had chosen to emphasize as the "most obvious link between the late romantic style and the new language of today"; and another of the music of Liszt, "a great innovator" whose choral and symphonic works, in the words of the Philharmonic's press release, "had great impact and influence on the musical life of their time, but are virtually unknown and unperformed today." And the season of 1972-73 would offer retrospectives of Haydn and Stravinsky—Haydn, Boulez explained to Heyworth, as the example of the famous composer "who wrote a lot of works that are very rarely performed"; Stravinsky, "not just as an act of homage, but to try to get a general view of his music and see what he really means in the music of his time."

Translated into the realities of the actual music to be performed, these impressive words of Boulez meant that because of Liszt's influence on the musical life of his time the Philharmonic subscribers were going to have to listen to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

works of his that were unperformed and unknown today for the simple reason that in the hundred years since then music-lovers had found them empty and boring in their pretentiousness. ("[Liszt's] devotion to serious composition," Bernard Shaw wrote after performances of *St. Elizabeth* and the *Dante Symphony,* "seems as hopeless a struggle against natural incapacity as Benjamin Haydon's determination to be a great painter.") And the Philharmonic subscribers were going to have to listen to a number of works by Berg—the *Lulu* Suite, the Violin Concerto, the Lyric Suite, among others—in a musical language they found ugly and disliked, in order to perceive that these works provided a link to the musical language of today which the subscribers disliked even more.

On the other hand, a Haydn series offering the subscribers the great works that were rarely heard —the masses of Haydn's last years, his incandescent last symphonies, Nos. 92-104—would have been something to rejoice over; but the actual series Boulez put together—though it included the *Theresienmesse* and *Harmoniemesse* and the Symphonies Nos. 95 and 96—offered in addition the less consequential Symphonies Nos. 26, 31, 49, 60, and 79, Sinfonie Concertante, and Cello Concerto in C in preference to some of the greatest of the final symphonies, Nos. 92, 93, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, and 104. And the subscribers would have had reason to rejoice over a Stravinsky series offering certain great works of his that were unfamiliar to them—above all the ballet score *Le Baiser de la Fée,* in my opinion his greatest work after *Le Sacre,* but also the scores for *Apollo, Jeu de Cartes,* and *Orpheus.* But not one of these or the other great works of Stravinsky was included in the profusion of pieces—most of them trivial or unattractive or ugly —which gave the subscribers a general view of his music that was, in its incompleteness, inaccurate and misleading.

Moreover, whereas a museum keeps most of its collection of masterpieces on view during a special show, Boulez's retrospectives, added to the contemporary works, crowded out all but a few of the masterpieces the Philharmonic subscribers attended the concerts to hear. In the season of 1971-72 they heard several major works of Mozart and three of Brahms, but only two major symphonies of Haydn in addition to a cello concerto; only Beethoven's Symphony No. 4 in addition to the *Leonore* No. 1 Overture and *Prometheus* music; not one major symphony of Schubert, but only the early Nos. 4 and 5; not one major work of Berlioz, but only the *Corsair* Overture; only the Symphony No. 5 of Tchaikovsky; only *La Mer* of Debussy; and not one of the major works of Stravinsky, but only *Song of the Nightingale* and *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto.* And in the current season—in which the retrospectives are replaced by a number of works offered as demonstrating the continuity between the early romantic composers Schubert, Weber, and Berlioz and the late romantic Strauss, Mahler, and Schönberg, and by the three settings of passages of Goethe's *Faust* by Berlioz in *La Damnation de Faust,* Schumann in *Scenes from Faust,* and Mahler in his Eighth Symphony—the subscribers are to hear a larger number of major works of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Berlioz, and Debussy, but not one work of Haydn, not one of the great works of Stravinsky, only the Fourth Symphony and Violin Concerto of Brahms, and only the Fifth Symphony of Tchaikovsky.

As IT happened, the first time I heard Michael Tilson Thomas conduct the Boston Symphony, early in 1971, he performed the Webern Six Pieces Op. 6 and Debussy *Images* that Boulez had performed at his first New York concert; and I was astounded again by what had astounded me in the Boulez performances. I was in fact even more astounded this time, since it was someone so young whose extraordinary gifts produced those marvelous sounds and textures, those perfectly shaped progressions, that absolutely exact rightness of statement. Those gifts in one so young led Leonard Bernstein to say to Thomas, "You're *me* at that age"; but Bernstein was mistaken: the unfailing rightness of statement in Thomas's performances was evidence of the control of his gifts by the discipline that is the rarest gift of all, the one that is essential and crucial in the achievement of great art; and the young Bernstein's performances exhibited no such rightness of statement, because he had, then as now, no such discipline controlling his gifts.

At that first concert of his that I heard, Thomas added to the works of Debussy and Webern Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 for strings and Ingolf Dahl's Concerto for Alto Saxophone, in accordance with his idea that the way to make a program interesting was to present works for groups which differed in size and instrumental composition. One could point out that such interest was achievable with the works in which essentially the same orchestra was used in the different ways of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Strauss, Mahler, Debussy, and Stravinsky. And on the other hand the next program I heard Thomas perform with the Boston Symphony demonstrated how boring Bach could be with a small group of strings, winds, and drums in his Suite No. 4, how boring Schönberg could be with the entire symphony orchestra in his Five Pieces Op. 16, how boring Stravinsky could be with a differently constituted small instrumental and vocal group in *Rénard,* but how interesting Tchaikovsky was with his varied use of the entire orchestra in the different styles of the divertissements in Act 3 of *Swan Lake.*

This act of *Swan Lake,* which I doubt had ever been performed at a symphony concert before, illustrated the wider range of Thomas's musical interests that made his combinations of old and new more satisfying than Boulez's. Thomas's very first program with the Boston Symphony in October 1969 began with Haydn's Symphony No. 98, continued with Ives's *Three Places in New England* and Stravinsky's Variations, and ended with Debussy's *La Mer.* And similar programs for his subsequent guest appearances included a piece by the 12th-century composer Perotin,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

part of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons,* Bach's Cantatas Nos. 4, 51, and 140, Mozart's Symphonies K. 297 and 338 and Serenade K. 388, Haydn's Symphony No. 97, Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8, Brahms's Symphony No. 2, Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 1, Borodin's Symphony No. 2, Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel,* Mahler's Symphonies Nos. 5 and 9, Stravinsky's *Firebird* Suite, *Le Sacre du Printemps,* and *Pulcinella* Suite, Prokofiev's *Scythian Suite.*

Thomas made it known that he didn't want to be tied to the old format of symphony concerts but wanted to do special things; and also that he liked to hear music he had never heard before. And so after a couple of years he began to do special things in his Spectrum Concerts outside of the regular Boston Symphony series. His two-part "Stravinsky Retrospective" did, unlike Boulez's, include two major works—*Le Sacre du Printemps* at the end of the first concert, the *Symphony of Psalms* at the end of the second; but these were preceded by some of Stravinsky's most unattractive works—the Symphonies of Wind Instruments, Violin Concerto, *Scènes de Ballet,* Requiem Canticles. Enough people wanted to hear his performances of *Le Sacre* and the *Symphony of Psalms* for these two concerts to be sold out; but a Boston friend informed me there wasn't much interest in the other concerts, which offered some of the oddities Thomas had discovered in his exploration of unfamiliar music. Certain of the programs my friend characterized as "awful," referring specifically to "Variations of the Orchestra," with pieces by Mouret ("Music from the court of France c. 1675"), Stamitz, Richter, and Filtz ("Music of Mannheim c. 1770"), Webern's *Sommerwind* ("Music from Vienna c. 1900"), and Berio and Cage ("Music of the world c. 1972"); and to "A Multiples Concert," with a piece for four organs by Reich and Liszt's *Hexameron* for six pianos and orchestra.

"I HAVEN'T always been in music," Thomas was quoted as saying. "I have other areas of interest"; to which he added, "I never want to be just a conductor," and "I'd hate to be tied to the old format of conducting symphony concerts." Boulez too began to conduct only quite recently, and with the interests of a composer of today, which may lead him to give up conducting for the direction of the projected research center in Paris in which there will be the collaboration of composers, performers, and scientists that he thinks necessary for the renewal of a dying art. All this reveals an important difference between these two supremely gifted conductors of today and those of twenty years ago. Cantelli, like Toscanini, had always been in music, had no other areas of interest, and had no intellectual sophistication to keep him from being content to be just a conductor and to perform the music it was considered the conductor's duty to perform within the established format of symphony concerts. And the result was that with the occasional uninteresting piece by Martucci on a Toscanini program, or the one by Ghedini on a Cantelli program, music-lovers heard great performances of music which for the most part they were interested in hearing; whereas today they can hear the Boulez performance of the one work they are interested in, or the Thomas performances of the two such works, only by sitting through the two or three unattractive works Boulez and Thomas are impelled to perform by their thinking about new models of concert life.

Jews and the Tragic Sense

Frederick Plotkin

THROUGHOUT its history, Judaism has been haunted by a dilemma —at whose door shall its troubles be laid? That Jews themselves, the men and women now in the world, or those who perished at Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Maidanek, Treblinka, are in any way responsible for its distractions is a proposition too preposterous for any save the fanatics to entertain. No one—I stop short of saying no one in his right mind—any longer believes it. Honesty and experience forbid us to believe that all the sufferings of the Jews are owing to their own follies. Some mysterious agency has been at work, whose doings we cannot fathom, and from which we are estranged. Yet Jews desire, and ardently desire, to think well of that agency, for His might, whatever we may think of His morals, cannot be questioned. They desire to believe in His good intentions toward them and even to worship Him.

Jews, to paraphrase Polybius, have been more religious than God Himself. Surely, Jews think, God cannot be our enemy; they cherish the idea that God above looks down with a friendly eye. But Jews have not been of that opinion at all times. Indeed, a great mass of forbidding evidence raises itself up against the thesis that God was ever kind to Israel. The book of Job, in Israel's own Bible, contains eloquent descriptions of the human lot—its desolation ascribed not to men but to the Lord of the Universe.

When Job's friends, in conformity with Jewish belief and tradition, contend that it is his own sin which has brought upon him the divine displeasure, he breaks out in scornful indignation. He refuses to listen to such sophistries. The sense that he has done his utmost to serve God and do righteousness, and nonetheless has been betrayed

FREDERICK PLOTKIN, *a new contributor, is the author of, among other works,* Milton's Inward Jerusalem *and the forthcoming* Judaism and Tragic Theology *(Schocken).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and abandoned, is strong in him; the outbursts of the most modern pessimists are matched in his fierce utterances:

I will not restrain my mouth,
I will speak in the heaviness
of my spirit,
I will complain in the bitterness
of my soul. . . .

Were I to call, and he answered
I would not believe that he heard
my voice. . . .
He mocks at the despair of the
guiltless.

Job submits because he must, but he is not persuaded either of the benevolence or of the justice of God. With scornful irony he answers his critics:

No doubt ye are the people,
And wisdom will die with you.
But I have a head as well as you;
I am not inferior to yourselves
Yea, who knoweth not such
things as these?

What things? That evil befalls the righteous as well as the unrighteous, that virtue is no shield against the misfortunes and miseries of life.

Throughout the myths and fables of many races runs this theme of the indifference or tyranny of God. And with it, of course, the accompanying themes that mankind has had its champions, who met that tyranny with determined opposition. Interpret the story of Job as you will, at least its critical attitude toward God is sufficient evidence of the profound discordance felt at one stage in the history of Israel between Jews and their surroundings, the inexplicable disharmony between their desires and dreams, the resistances they everywhere encountered.

Disappointment with life in some form or other lies at the root, too, of all religion. Had life contented us, had it been all that we could wish, we should already be in heaven, and in no need to seek happiness here or elsewhere. And to persuade men that the Creator is a God of Love, and their misfortunes of their own contriving, has proved an embarrassing and not too successful undertaking. Yet the desire for a protecting God is written large in Jewish history and thought. And Jews cannot but marvel that the Lord should be blind, deaf, and heartless. Jewish logic and emotion both revolt from that conception and from such a juxtaposition of ideas, magnificence unrelated to wisdom, grandeur divorced from soul. If you have reached the conclusion that the universe is an iron-bound mechanism, you may close your synagogues and temples and put away your books of devotion. To worship a machine, however vast, is no less an idolatry than to do obeisance before a graven image. Most Jews will have it that omnipotence and benevolence should somehow be in alliance. It is the thought of their heritage, and none more natural. Deny, however, that God can be to blame for the Jewish condition, and what alternative offers itself, where look for its explanation?

"Evil," announces Spinoza in his *Ethics,* with considerable geometrical flourish, "is nothing positive." How blue and cloudless is the sky of 17th-century Amsterdam! "A little water," as Lady Macbeth remarked of the murder of Duncan, "A little water clears us of this deed." As the medieval exorcist scattered legions of devils with a sprinkling of holy water and a formula, so liberal philosophers put to flight the agonies, the inhumanities, the plagues and cruelties of the Holocaust with a single word. They vanish into the limbo of Spinoza's "negative," and anxiety is at an end. Every survivor of the camps becomes a prejudiced witness.

"There is nothing either good or bad," we read in Shakespeare, "but thinking makes it so." If, then, thought occupies so high a seat, wields a magisterial authority from which there is no appeal, must we not assume it equal to all undertakings, competent to determine all cases and terminate all disputes? Yet when one looks back into the past, or even around in the present, one wonders whether such praise is not overdone, a trifle excessive, whether in fact men can be said to think at all. We talk of reason, our society lays great store by it, but when did reason ever control human affairs, or does it now control them? Revolutions which begin in the name of reason commonly end in wholesale slaughter. Thought of a kind goes on all about us in the world, yet who believes, for example, that where there is universal suffrage there is universal intelligence or that where there is education there is good sense, that where there is religious toleration there is philo-Semitism, that where there is representative government there is also justice?

IF SOME Jews mistrust rationalism, they have reason for their mistrust. Rationalists are much too simple-minded to act as guides or interpreters in this uncanny and incalculable world. Remember the curious and profoundly interesting story of Balaam in the Bible, a man of great reputation in his day, so great that the King of Moab sent for him in extremity. He saddled his ass and went to meet the king, but the Lord sent an angel to prevent him, and the angel stood across his path. And Balaam, though a man of high intelligence, did not see the angel of the Lord, but the ass saw him.

Still, the Jew who has placed all his hopes in God can expect but little from the rest of mankind. Indeed, the most far-reaching commandments of Torah can have the effect of putting him in a place of solitude apart, where he is separated from the rest of the world by an unbridgeable chasm. This realm of spiritual solitude may even bear a superficial resembance to the "polar wastes" in which Nietzsche places the soul which is homeless and far from God; in reality, however, the solitude of the Jew is a solitude in which he is alone with God, and hence it is a condition of the utmost intimacy and warmth. Without this ideal, many Jews could not act or live. Thus it is that the Jew's activism and his reason must always have a note of incompletion; it is a strange paradox that such a person must always be on the move, like the wandering Jew, and yet never arrive at his goal.

Yet, is there any guarantee that the truth, if it could be ascertained, would coincide with the good, or with what most men would agree was the good, if any such consensus were ever possible? Many philosophies have been built upon the assumption that the true and the good are one and the same. Much may be said for that thesis. Never-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

theless, it is an assumption, an essay of faith. The universe of history contains secrets, which, if discovered, would astound both Jew and Gentile alike, but whether with terror or delight, who can tell?

Some Jewish thinkers of the past, like Spinoza, have been driven to the desperate expedient of asserting that the true must be good, however villainous or tragic it appears. Every species of wickedness and folly to befall the carriers of the Jewish heritage, every kind of agony, physical and spiritual, must somehow be called good simply because it exists, it happened. To my mind, however, if Jews propose to use the words "good" and "evil," they are obliged to use them in a human and intelligible sense. This juggling which merely changes the names, but leaves the pains and anguish, has no validity. Not a few Jewish philosophers have clung passionately to the hope we all share that the nearer to the truth the nearer to felicity, yet how much has the fruit of the tree of knowledge added to human felicity?

Kohelet the Preacher declared that he "who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," and that truth is a synonym for disillusion. Other, more ancient Jewish thinkers, quite obsessed with messianic speculation and a vision of what may be termed "circularity," were of the opinion (and can one assert with conviction that it is not a manifestly absurd belief?) that the happiness of our race would be increased by a return to earlier and more primitive conditions and practices, that Judaism should endeavor to forget its gains of admittedly dubious value, and retrace its steps in time. This notion, that the felicity of Eden lay behind us, has its echoes in Rousseau, and indeed reverberates all through Christian eschatological thought. The miseries of man arose, this argument runs, from eating of the fruit of knowledge. But the peculiar and mysterious fact is that, however poisonous, some Jews continue to crave it, to believe it the healthiest diet, and to consume it with eager appetites; even to be convinced that it is a sovereign, therapeutic remedy for all diseases.

The doctrine of the perfectibility of the world is old. It is not, however, basic to Hebraic or even Christian doctrine; rather, as Schopenhauer observed, it is radically irreligious. Men simply cannot get along without religion. If one is abandoned, another is adopted. And much of modern Jewish humanitarianism, much Jewish welfare work, is an effort to fill the great spiritual void left by the decay of faith, a drab substitute for the older creed. The spirit of Jews after the Holocaust craves a friendly God who *knows* them, and they are given economics instead. They ask for peace and forgiveness, for they are alive in a post-Holocaust world, and they are told something like: "Since there is nothing beyond the present to be hoped for, let us make the only lives Jews will ever know less pitiably wretched." As the tide of Judaism has receded, the tide of this secular creed, the only alleged alternative for American Jewry, it seems, has correspondingly risen.

"The soul is naturally Christian," said Tertullian. Yes, Jews may add, and it is naturally pagan too. It is divided against itself. Judaism, both ancient and modern, knows it well, this double mind; but this division is not of our making. It is from nature, "from the opposites inherent in all being within the world," in the phrase of Martin Buber, that we inherit this double-mindedness.

If man is good, it has been asked, why does he do evil? If evil, why does he love the good? Nature has decreed that he shall desire incompatible things—to have, for example, the approval of others, and yet go his own unhindered way. He seeks unity and peace with his neighbors, and at the same time to be the controller of their lives. Nature urges him to exert all his powers, and in an instant their exercise precipitates him into a struggle with the interests of others. He is at once the lover and rival of others.

Nevertheless, God's tolerance for the superfluous disgusts many secular Jews. They would contract his spacious universe into a tidy garden of secular saints. In the *Laws*, Plato becomes very stern with his fellow creatures. In the state he pictures, a fascist state, there is no liberty of opinion, no toleration of disbelief, or interference with the established order. And the penalty for breaking these laws is death, as it was the penalty for heresy in the early Church. Those wise men who know what is best for the world are to be congratulated. To know that you are a prophet of the Lord is a great thing—to have no doubts. It is a great thing to be so deep in His counsels that you can speak *ex cathedra*, and hand over delinquents to the executioner.

The passion for reforming one's neighbors out of existence, or at least out of the existence they prefer—and the two are often found together—afflicts even more grievously those who have lost their faith in God than those who believe in Him. The seceders to the Judaism of the ethical idealists, the present American Jews of the secular kingdom, having dispossessed God of His authority, are at no loss to replace Him. They mount the vacant throne, deify their own consciences, would have men bow and worship their ideals, and proceed to establish a tyranny more irksome than that of their ecclesiastical predecessors.

Sois mon frère ou je te tue. Who conferred this astounding magistracy? What, one wonders, do our reformers propose to do with men in whom the opposites are in startling evidence?

THERE is an old belief which has its source in the Orphic sayings that Zeus created man from his tears. Tears are, indeed, a mark of the human. None of man's efforts can quite bridge the hiatus between existence and ideality. Man is forever doomed to renounce. Knowledge and joy in one direction mean ignorance and pain in another direction. And behind and above all stands the irretrievable phenomenon that is death, mute and sphinxlike, an eternal signpost of man's impermanence. This is tragedy. Yet the visualization of what need not be tragic, a wholehearted activity directed toward removing that suffering not due to God or nature—these are still left to us. If Zeus created man from his tears, Prometheus placed power into man's hands that these be shed not altogether in vain.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nostalgia and Adultery

William S. Pechter

"WHERE were you in '62?" the ads for *American Graffiti* ask. Wherever I was I recall doing my best to stay out of earshot of the kind of Alan Freed-style music which washes over the film from start to finish as pervasively as the very air that's breathed. Curiously, that music has become more bearable to me—detoxified, as it were, by my knowledge that it's now (at least outside this picture) escapable, and by the fact that even graduates of the generation that once devoured it now recognize it mainly to have been trash. ("Rock-'n'-roll's been goin' downhill since Buddy Holly died," one of the film's characters remarks, which, along with some speculation on whether a girl looks more like Connie Stevens or Sandra Dee, is about as close as the film gets to open condescension.) But those whose music it once was feel nostalgia for it, and for the period *American Graffiti* evokes; I don't. And for them the film's nonstop spectacle of grooving with disc jockey "Wolfman Jack," eating "Chubby Chuckburgers" at Mel's Drive-In, and cruising all night in their cars has an anthropological significance which for me inheres rather in jumping with "Symphony Sid," eating fried soft-shell crab sandwiches in the back of Grant's, and dozing over the Sunday *Times* on the E train at 3 A.M. on Sunday morning while trying not to sleep past one's stop; and the very fact that I'm as incapable of responding to their cherished memorabilia as they to mine makes me realize that it's all equally without the kind of significance we like to attach to it.

But beyond my not responding to the period ephemera of *American Graffiti,* I don't really quite believe in it. As it happens, Mel's Drive-In, where much of the film was photographed, is not far from where I live, and, in the several times I've passed it since I've seen the film, I've been aware that, from its appearance and that of its patrons alone (excluding only the presence of late-model automobiles), one might not be sure whether one were seeing it in the 70's or the 50's. Surely there must have been something in the summer of 1962 besides d.a.'s and drag races, something which didn't scream "1962!" at you.* Though I'm susceptible to it, unadulterated nostalgia, at least nostalgia for unworthy objects, seems to me fundamentally an enervating half-emotion, and I soon found cloying, even sickening, the way this film milked it; there was something somehow offensive to my hitherto dormant puritan sensibilities in seeing the lavish expenditure of this film's skill and talent on the meticulous recreation of such things as a 60's sock hop. And as the implausibilities of plot began to proliferate (would the cute dumb blonde really have attached herself to the homely jerk as the film has her doing, or the hot-rodder had such difficulty in dumping the underage girl who attaches herself to him, or the owner of a borrowed car be so unperturbed about its being stolen, etc., etc.?), the effect was really rather like that of *Summer of '42,* watching which one had an image of the staff of the art department laboring like Michelangelos to produce Fels Naphtha boxes while everything else—all *essential* verisimilitude—was going awry.

This first reaction gradually gave way to another as it became apparent, if for no other reason than that the film was simply too intelligent merely to be hustling nostalgia, however ironically, that something else must be impelling it. And, for a while, I thought I began to discern in the artful choreography of its characters' apparently aimless comings and goings something of what Susan Sontag may have had in mind when she spoke of works in which "the 'content' has . . . come to play a purely formal role," and even to be reminded of such films as *The Round-Up* and *The Red and the White* by the extraordinary Hungarian director, Miklos Jancso, in which what seemed at times to be a purely formal exercise in the grouping and regrouping of characters for rhythmic, textural, and decorative effects eventually took on a distinctive meaning of its own.

BUT the hope that *American Graffiti* might be anything so audacious also proved short-lived. If, at its best, the film does suggest some of Jancso's rhythmic and textural richness, one nevertheless sees before long that all the work's narrative strands, however freely they've been woven, are going to be gathered, and in the most conventional of fashions. And so each plot line issues in its predictable dénouement: the clean-cut class president finds he cannot bring himself to leave his cheerleader girl friend, and decides not to go away to college; the dumb blonde has a good time with the jerk, and promises to see him again; the swaggering king of the drag strip is revealed to be a sentimental softy, and realizes his racing days are numbered; and the protagonist, torn between his ambivalent attitudes about leaving his home town to go away to college, opts

* I gather from those far more knowledgeable about the period than I that much of the film's music is, in fact, from an earlier period, the songs already "golden oldies" by the time in which the movie is set.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

finally for the great world outside, though this last, and main, story is left somewhat confused by the conflicting symbols around which it is organized—Wolfman Jack, the mythically hip disc jockey who is reputed to broadcast from Mexico but turns out to be only a very uncharismatic man stuck in the same provincial town as the rest of the characters, and a mysterious blonde in a white Thunderbird who cruises the town and seems to hold out the promise of infinite romance. (The Wolfman Jack material is further muddied by the fact that the real Wolfman Jack, who plays himself, did broadcast from over the border in Mexico, beaming a signal so powerful it was illegal by FCC regulations, and actually was something of a mythic figure if only on the scale of the puny myths of rock culture.)

As if the plot strands weren't thus sufficiently tied up, the film concludes with end-titles, infusing all that has gone before with a lot of unearned and phony poignancy as it reveals how each of the characters ended up years later: the class president who didn't leave town, an insurance salesman; the jerk (who's been as broadly cartooned as "Jughead" in *Archie* comics) killed in Vietnam; the drag racer run down by a drunk driver; the protagonist living in Canada, having become a writer. (This last, while it seems in no necessary way to emerge from the character that the film has depicted, does at least somewhat justify in retrospect the curiously detached air of wry amusement with which Richard Dreyfuss, who's so explosive a Baby Face Nelson in *Dillinger*, plays him.) Indeed, to judge from recent specimens in such films as *The French Connection, Dillinger,* etc., I suspect that end titles threaten to become to the 70's what freeze frames were in the 60's: the new cliché ending, affording film-makers an opportunity to assert profundities they've been unable otherwise to communicate, and, with this, providing as ingenious a shortcut to artistic creation as any that man has devised since the advent of painting by numbers.

So finally *American Graffiti* turns out to be both something less adventurous than that abstract balletic spectacle I thought I caught glimpses of, and of less dramatic impact than such a more conventional work as *The Last Picture Show.* And yet there are things in *American Graffiti* that *are* impressive; it *is* richly textured, and fluently cut, and visually handsome. (The photography, which was supervised by Haskell Wexler, seems to bathe the entire film in the pinkish glow of headlights, street lights, and neon.) These were the qualities also of director George Lucas's first feature film, *THX 1138,* if brought here, in his second, to a higher degree; but both films, for all their technical proficiency, seem to me exercises, warmups for work which may yet come. And both films seem to me basically empty, the films of a director working in a dramatic medium whose purely technical skills as a film-maker are developed beyond any gifts he's yet revealed as a dramatist. If richness of texture alone were enough to make a great film, *American Graffiti* might be the masterpiece some of its enthusiasts are claiming it to be. As it is, Lucas seems to me a director of formidable technique still very much in search of a first work of more than merely technical distinction.

"Of course, I've nothing against adultery; some of my best friends are adulterers," one may soon find oneself saying of yet another oppressed minority demanding its due. Times have changed; one needs to be broadminded. And the movies, where the wages of fooling around were once likely to prove fatal, have done their best to keep up, their changing scruples reflected in one recent movie's title: *I Could Never Have Sex with Any Man Who Has So Little Regard for My Husband.* Or as George Segal remarks to Glenda Jackson in *A Touch of Class,* one of two recent films in which he portrays a participant in an extramarital affair, "I've never been unfaithful to my wife [while we're] in the same city."

In the other of these films, *Blume in Love,* Segal's philandering does have serious consequences: not death, but divorce (or to put it precisely in California legal parlance, "dissolution of marriage"). This is serious not because of divorce itself—like adultery, divorce has long since been divested of dramatic shock in our movies as in our culture—but because Stephen Blume, the character Segal plays, loves his wife, Nina, or at least thinks he does. In any case, he's obsessed with winning her back, and his efforts to do so constitute the film's story.

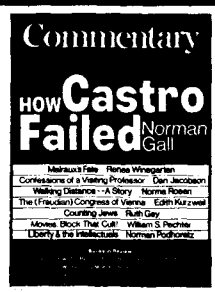
Blume is, in fact, an affluent divorce lawyer in Los Angeles, a locale in which the film's writer-director, Paul Mazursky, has specialized to the point of its being his subject. Mazursky's two earlier films as a director were *Alex in Wonderland* and *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice,* both written in collaboration with Larry Tucker, with whom he had previously collaborated on the script of *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas* for another director. (Before entering films, the two had been involved with the Second City improvisational theater company.) There's an echo in *Blume in Love* of the scene in *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas* in which two men sit in an outdoor café, and one of them anguishedly asks, "What do they want from me?" as they watch the endless numbers of long-haired, mini-skirted girls stroll past, a scene which memorably captured the bewilderment and frustration of those the so-called "sexual revolution" had passed by. The only explicit explanation we are given for Blume's infidelity (which, at the time his wife catches him, consists of a single afternoon home early from the office with his lush black secretary) is his exclamation to his law partner that : ". . . you see it there, everywhere . . . no brassieres. . . ."

Fragmentary as this may be, it's at least more of an explanation than we're given for Nina's bitterly intransigent refusal of any reconciliation, and one searches the glimpses that we see in flashback of their six-year marriage (ended before the film begins) for some fuller understanding which doesn't really come. Facts are there, but somehow don't add up.

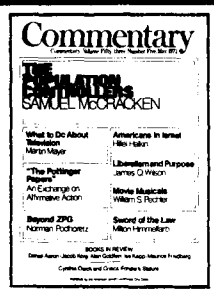
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BACK ISSUES

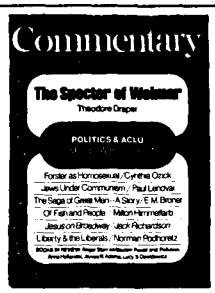
For new subscribers and old friends. Back issues of Commentary are now available at $1.50 while they last.



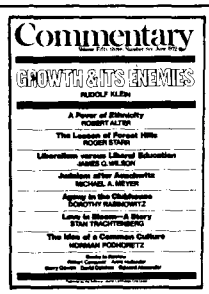
NOVEMBER 1971



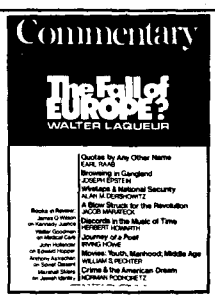
MAY 1972



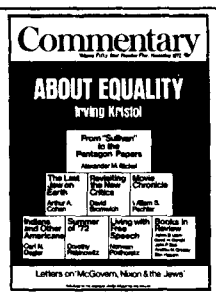
DECEMBER 1971



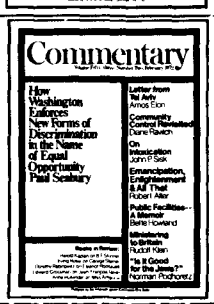
JUNE 1972



JANUARY 1972

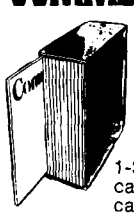


NOVEMBER 1972



FEBRUARY 1972

COMMENTARY SLIPCASE



The convenient way to preserve and organize your issues of Commentary. Each 9" x 12" slipcase of blue Boltoflex with "Commentary" stamped in gold-leaf, holds 12 issues.

1-3 slipcases $5.00 ea. 4-9 slipcases $4.50 ea. 10 or more slipcases $4.00 ea. (add 25 cents per slipcase for shipping)

Commentary 165 EAST 56 STREET NYC 10022

Please send me the following back issues at $1.50 each_____

Please send_____slipcases at $_____each.

Enclosed is my check for a total of $_____

(Commentary pays all packing & shipping costs)

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Their meeting at a benefit dance for the striking Delano farm workers. First and second honeymoons in Venice. He at his job, and she at hers as a worker for the Venice (California) Department of Welfare. Regular sessions (at least by her) on the couch. Some dabbling in such California-isms as encounter groups and yoga. His sarcasm after their attendance at a class in the latter in fact occasions what is probably the most fully articulated expression of the anger which one senses seething within her, and which his infidelity seems more to "legitimize" than to provoke. He's "always putting people down," she berates him; they have "everything anybody could want," and still they're "both miserable." When he protests he's not miserable, she belligerently declares, "We're not committed!" "I don't need a guilt trip about money on top of everything else!" he tells her. "You're full of shit, just like the rest of America!" she replies.

Cut loose from the moorings of their marriage, the two drift into new liaisons (he with Arlene, a divorcee friend of theirs, she with Elmo, an unemployed hippie musician whom she meets when he applies for welfare) across a Los Angeles setting, filled with unmoored people, which Mazursky explores with an attentiveness to cultural forms approaching that of an ethnographer investigating some hitherto undiscovered society. It's a society in which all communication is colored by the jargon of the "human-potential" movement. Blume and Arlene openly discuss their "using" each other, and she remarks of his ex-wife, "She's the only girl I know who doesn't have any ego hang-ups. She's very giving." Nina, donning love-beads with her easygoing musician, tells Blume, "I want to be free and open and clear in all my relationships," and, when he asks if she hates him, replies, "I don't have time for that," even as she's obviously still choked by it. Elmo, the mellow, "together" musician with his "good vibes" is the model aspired to, but though Blume and Nina desperately try to sing along with him they are hopelessly mired in their "uptight" feelings (at one point, she

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

plays her guitar and sings "You've Got a Friend" at the very moment she's rejecting Blume's clumsy attempts at rapprochement). And permeating all is the omnipresent authority of the "shrink," the guru-sphinx occasionally dispensing some pop wisdom but to be depended on mainly for the refrain of "We'll discuss it on Thursday." Between sessions, the characters flit hopefully from one panacea to the next: singles bars, swinging, communes, etc. In this world, it's the parents who are drop-outs and runaways, their kids the ones who have to send them money.

And perhaps what's most remarkable about Mazursky's observation of that world is its freedom from malice or ridicule. These people may behave ridiculously, but they aren't ridiculed; we are too aware of their vulnerability for that. In part, this owes to the performances, but surely these, too, are partly attributable to Mazursky, given that Segal has never been better (one has only to compare his frenetic, mechanical work in *A Touch of Class*) and that scarcely a trace of the tremendously appealing personality Kris Kristofferson (playing Elmo) reveals here was visible in his two earlier films. (Much as he seemed miscast in *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, Peckinpah must surely have been asleep at the wheel to have got so little out of him.) But though Susan Anspach as Nina, Marsha Mason as Arlene, and Shelley Winters as one of Blume's clients are also excellent, the film's generosity of feeling goes beyond performance to characterization. The portrait of a psychiatrist (played by an actual psychiatrist) in *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* is probably as vitriolic as any that recent movies have given us, but the psychiatrist in *Blume in Love*, if not exactly evoked with affection, is nevertheless seen chiefly from the aspect of his pathetic helplessness. "Sometimes it doesn't help. Sometimes it helps," he replies to Blume's doubts about the efficacy of psychotherapy; "Until we find something better, what else is there to do?" Working with the materials common to all his films, Mazursky has this time got more deeply into those materials than ever before; he's got all the way down to the pain.

And yet, though *Blume in Love* is Mazursky's most assured and fleshed-out film by far, something vital is missing from it, something more important to the movie than the misfirings of its would-be aphoristic wit at the beginning, or its dramatically weak ending (a weakness the endings of all of Mazursky's films have shared) of Blume's and Nina's reconciliation. We believe in Blume's obsession with regaining his wife, but we don't understand it; the suggestions that he (and she) may need their emotional violence for his (and her) sexual satisfaction remain only suggestions. (After his divorce, Blume goes through an episode of impotence dramatically cured when he engages in sexual relations while the television is tuned to scenes of combat, and his reconciliation with Nina takes place only after he rapes her, and she becomes pregnant.) And though we believe in Nina's anger, we don't understand that either; if in fact it stems from a liberal's guilty conscience (as her outburst about America might suggest) or from a nascent feminism of which there are hints, then surely her return to their life together ought to be seen as a kind of defeat rather than the heartwarming hokum it seems here. And that reconciliation itself is something we neither understand nor believe in; and, despite the film's attempt to keep tongue in cheek as a nine-months' pregnant Nina waddles into Blume's arms across the Piazza San Marco while the orchestra plays the *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde*, the result is as flagrant a serving of *schmaltz* as any we've had since Joan Crawford sacrificed herself for love of John Garfield while he fiddled the very same music in the 1947 *Humoresque*.

Or to bring the comparison up to date, it's as dishonest as George Segal ending his affair with Glenda Jackson in *A Touch of Class* in the name of his wife and children, characters for whom, throughout the film, he's demonstrated no hint of fondness, if not actual distaste, and who are depicted as no more than lifeless icons of middle-class respectability. Of course, in *A Touch of Class*, which is just machine-tooled junk, this is only one dishonesty among many; long before its pious embrace of domesticity, the film has falsified the reality of the adulterous affair by glossing over such details as the apparent accessibility to Miss Jackson (who plays a divorcee with children) of instantaneously available, marathon baby-sitting, and the seeming ease with which, in stolen moments, the couple convert a slum apartment rented for their meetings into a *House Beautiful* showplace. In a way, compared with *A Touch of Class*, the lack of conviction in *Blume in Love*'s ending could even be considered a form of honesty: the film's admission, despite its reluctance to say so, that, though it can believe in the sexual antagonism of Blume and Nina, it can't convincingly imagine the reality of their happy marriage, and perhaps even, by extension, of happy marriage itself. It seems to know (as we had better know) that, if we want to believe, and to continue to believe, in the viability of marriage, we're going to have to imagine something more compelling than moribund obligations, pregnancies, the *Liebestod*, and these films' other variations on string and chewing gum with which to hold our marriages together.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Brotherhood

THE IDEA OF FRATERNITY IN AMERICA. By WILSON CAREY MCWILLIAMS. *University of California Press. 695 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by
DAVID HERBERT DONALD

THIS enormous volume, "pretentious" and "intolerably long" by its author's admission, is really two distinct books bound together. One of them is an unqualified failure; the other a partial success.

The first hundred pages of *The Idea of Fraternity in America* are virtually unreadable. In them McWilliams, a political scientist who teaches at Rutgers University, gropes for a definition of fraternity. Presumably all these semantic quibbles, all these invocations of Simmel and Freud, all these references to Aristotle and Hobbes are necessary to establish McWilliams's credentials in his academic discipline. Most readers can skip these chapters, which even McWilliams calls "tortuous." They say only that "fraternity" is a vague and undefinable term that McWilliams intends to use to discuss any human relationship that interests him—from "warmth per se" to brotherhood to kinship to politics to government to society. Like Humpty Dumpty, McWilliams knows how to make a word mean what he chooses it to mean.

With these unfortunate preliminaries out of the way, McWilliams settles down to presenting a systematic radical critique of American history. He argues that there have been two main conflicting currents in American thought. One, "the traditional, religious culture inherited from the past," recognized the meaning of "the old words—obligation, honor, authority"—and it "understood fraternity." Most fully developed under the Puritan oligarchy, this older tradition was undercut by the "liberal modernism" of the age of the Enlightenment. By promoting individualism, this liberal tradition undermined the concept of community. Looking longingly toward a universal brotherhood of man, liberals forgot about individual men and true fraternity. In short, the Enlightenment creed "allowed the American to ease his conscience while he pursued gain, to be convinced that his duties to his brother and to his affluence were one and the same."

During the 19th century these "two juxtaposed, contradictory codes" coexisted uneasily. The religious creed, which persisted in "the older communities, the localities, the ethnic groups, the churches," helped to "soften the rigors of competition and the isolating effects of economic and social life." This older tradition also had powerful literary spokesmen, such as Hawthorne, Melville, and Mark Twain. But the opposing liberal tradition was clearly gaining dominance. In its support spoke the most powerful literary voices, such as Emerson, who expressed "hostility to fraternity among men in the name of the fraternity of mankind," and Whitman, whose poems were not songs of brotherhood but "the slogans of mass society." The Jacksonian Democrats, the labor leaders of the Gilded Age, the advocates of the Social Gospel, the Populists, and the Progressives all put interest ahead of community, an "almost vacuous consensus" ahead of meaningful brotherhood.

By the 20th century, McWilliams finds, the older tradition was surviving only on a few "islands of traditional culture." White religious and ethnic groups have undergone a "general process of deculturation." Catholics and Jews, Irish and Italians have discarded their fraternal cultures and now view the old ways as "symbols to be admired and appreciated but not lived." Only black Americans, with "their greater understanding of the problem of human identity," have persisted in "the continued quest for fraternity."

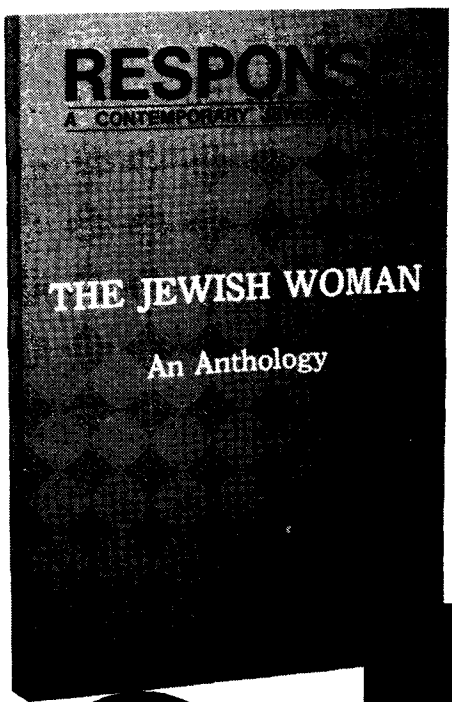
McWilliams has thus stood Progressive historiography upon its head. His book is curiously like a mirror image of Vernon L. Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought,* with Parrington's heroes, from Roger Williams on, now on the side of evil, and the conservatives, whom Parrington condemned or slighted as "belle-lettrists," as the true seers. In all this there is much that is interesting and valuable, and more that is good, clean academic fun. McWilliams's reading of 19th-century literary figures is acute if tendentious, and it is refreshing to have Hawthorne praised as a political man and Whitman condemned as a flatulent bore. McWilliams's attack upon the liberal tradition gains added power from the fact that it is not just an academic exercise; this book reflects his "own lover's quarrel with the Left," his fear that the impassioned demand of young radicals for brotherhood may prove to be nothing more than another attempt to realize "the old liberal utopia, a world of total private liberty and the ability to gratify desires."

DESPITE McWilliams's evident sincerity and industry, the second part of *The Idea of Fraternity* is only partially convincing as a radical interpretation of the American past. A book so badly written, so tediously verbose, so enormously discursive seems better designed to clarify the author's convictions than to persuade his readers. It is disheartening that McWilliams's appeal for order, coherence, and symmetry should be voiced in a book that is diffuse, tortuous, and repetitious.

Then, too, much of McWilliams's story rests upon bad history. It is perhaps a forgivable exaggeration to claim that "thousands" of blacks participated in slave revolts or to assert that the

DAVID HERBERT DONALD *is Charles Warren Professor of American History at Harvard University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Can you explain to your daughter why...

"The most important ceremony marking the birth of a Jewish child is circumcision."

–from a contemporary textbook used in Hebrew schools

the jewish woman —an anthology

Published by RESPONSE/A CONTEMPORARY JEWISH REVIEW

Some of the provocative contents:

- The Jewish Feminist: Conflict in Identities
- The Oppression of the Jewish Woman
- Sexism in the Jewish Student Community
- The Other Half: Women in the Jewish Tradition
- On Saying Kaddish, A Letter to Haym Peretz from Henrietta Szold
- The Jew Who Wasn't There: Halacha and the Jewish Woman
- On the Birth of a Daughter
- The Bat Mitzvah Problem
- Portnoy's Mother's Complaint: Depression in Middle-Aged Women
- Women in the Talmud
- The "Independent" Woman
- Women in Israel

SCHOLARS have long explained the role of the woman in Judaism as separate in function, but equal in stature. In a provocative challenge, Paula E. Hyman, anthology contributor and lecturer at the Jewish Theological Seminary states: ". . . we have a handful of token women (Deborah, Esther, Bruriah) bearing on their frail shoulders the apologists' argument that within Judaism women could obtain positions of authority and influence comparable to those of men."

Throughout 190 pages, in 30 articles, Jewish feminists search for an integrated identity as Jews and as women. In examining their search, you will find for yourself answers to one of today's most troubling questions in Judaism. This is "must" reading for both sexes. Get several copies now, for your family and your friends.

190 pages • $2.00 a copy

At your local bookseller, or order from the publisher . . .

BULK RATE

1-100 copies	$2.00 each
101-250 copies	1.80 each
251-500 copies	1.60 each
501-1,000 copies	1.40 each

RESPONSE, P.O.B. 1496, Brandeis U., Waltham, Mass. 02154
Please send me _____ copies of THE JEWISH WOMAN @ $2.00 each. Enclosed is my check or M.O. for $_____ (including applicable state or city taxes).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please make checks payable to: RESPONSE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Civil War marked "a gigantic, decisive step into the world of industrialism." But it is simply indefensible for McWilliams—after an unfair and untrue attack upon the late Richard Hofstadter's scholarship—to portray the Populists as proto-socialists, to announce that the redeeming features in the Progressive movement were "few or none," and to assert that "the natural children of the New Deal" were "Dresden, Hiroshima, the Cold War." Political passion is not a substitute for research, and rhetorical exaggeration must not be allowed to interfere with the facts of history.

Third, McWilliams's mournful account of the decline of community in America rests upon questionable sources. He makes no attempt to ascertain whether most Americans—in Dubuque and Atlanta as well as in Berkeley and New Brunswick—are in fact as estranged and rootless as he thinks. To support his belief he cites mostly literary figures, and even here the selection is skewed. Hawthorne and Melville together receive seventy-one pages of discussion; Robert Frost and T. S. Eliot, who might not support McWilliams's thesis, are mentioned just nine times. Non-literary men who have done the most systematic thinking about American society hardly appear in his pages at all: John C. Calhoun and Theodore Roosevelt, William Graham Sumner and Walter Lippmann, Lester Ward and Talcott Parsons.

Finally, McWilliams has a curiously romantic notion about American blacks and their history. Scornful of white clubs and lodges, he extols the Black Panthers, who have "raised fraternity to a higher status." White churches and synagogues he dismisses as totally insignificant in keeping alive a sense of community, but black religious leaders have sustained "a vision of man and fraternity, a knowledge of injustice suffered and retribution due." The "neighborliness" of white suburbia is superficial and specious, but the ghetto gives blacks a true sense of brotherhood. In sum, McWilliams's tone is oddly reminiscent of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who also hoped that America would be regenerated through the Christian love of Uncle Tom and his descendants.

All these deficiencies mean that McWilliams has written a bad book—the first part irrelevant and unintelligible; the second, overambitious and underresearched. The pity is that it did not have to be a failure. A man of humane intelligence and wide erudition, McWilliams has included in these pages some shrewd and acute criticisms of the American liberal tradition. Unfortunately they are largely buried under his bad history and worse style.

Between Two Worlds

TRAVELERS. By RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA. *Harper & Row. 247 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by JOHANNA KAPLAN

RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA has written seven novels and three collections of short stories, yet she has remained relatively unknown in this country. That this should be so seems puzzling, on the basis of almost any one of her books, and certainly in their totality, she deserves to be seen as a major contemporary novelist. Recently, with the publication of her latest novel, *Travelers,* she has begun to receive some of the attention long overdue her.

Born in Germany to Polish-Jewish parents, Mrs. Jhabvala left with them for England where she was educated. In England, also, she met and married her Indian husband, and since 1951 she has lived in India, raised a family there, and has written about India almost exclusively. (She did write one story, "A Birthday in London," about German-Jewish refugees in England, but apart from the high charm of her customary intelligence, precision, and economy, this story has a sour sense—a crabbed, melancholy oppressiveness and physical ugliness not found in any of her other work.) I mention these facts of her life not only because they are interesting to know but because Mrs. Jhabvala's career raises the peculiar issue of cultural transplantation for an artist. She does not at all consider herself a writer in exile, but rather a writer of two worlds, perhaps between two worlds. The question of how much between has become, on the evidence of her books, an increasingly problematic one.

"As soon as I got here, I began writing about India," she recently told a New York *Times* interviewer. "It came about instinctively. I was enraptured. I felt I understood India so well. I loved everything." Mrs. Jhabvala's early, instantaneous embracing of her new country was not the blind, foolish ecstasy of a foreigner for an "exotic" culture, eagerly accepting and celebrating everything that is alien simply because it is so. She has in fact drawn typically acute portraits of such people—notably Clarissa, the dippy, wandering Englishwoman in *A Backward Place,* and Hans, a gawky, hopelessly earnest German boy in *The Householder.* Here is the first meeting between Hans, who has been brought to India by his dream of a beckoning holy man, and Prem, a young Indian schoolteacher, newly burdened by the demands of making a living for his wife and coming child:

> He [Hans] unfolded his arms again and called in a loud joyful voice, "How I love your India!" His pale eyes behind the rimless spectacles shone with happiness, he showed moist, colorless gums in a blissful smile. "For me it is all one big feast!"
>
> Prem felt called upon to make some comment. He was proud to hear a foreigner speak so highly of India, it raised all his patriotism. "Since Independence," he said, "we have made great strides forward. For instance our second Five Year Plan—"
>
> "Everything is so spiritual—we can wash off our dirty materialism when we come to your India. Off with it!" and he started quite literally scrubbing at his arms and then at his neck with great vigor.
>
> "There are our new steel plants," said Prem. "Six million tons of steel—"

JOHANNA KAPLAN, *whose fiction and criticism have appeared in* COMMENTARY *and Harper's, is currently at work on a novel.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Empire Kosher Poultry gives you 44 choices to satisfy your needs:

Take your pick of America's biggest selection of quality Kosher poultry

Fresh or frozen, ready-to-cook or pre-cooked, there's a delicious product to satisfy your taste, preparation, convenience or budgetary requirements. Eat in good faith . . . eat in good health!

KOSHER Empire POULTRY

The Most Trusted Name in Kosher Poultry

INSPECTED BY THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE P-1015

At butcher shops, food stores and dellys in most major cities coast-to-coast.

© EKPI, 1973

READY-TO-COOK:

- ☐ Cut-Up Frying Chicken
- ☐ Frying Chicken Breasts
- ☐ Frying Chicken Legs
- ☐ Frying Chicken Wings
- ☐ Whole Frying Chicken
- ☐ Whole Young Pullet
- ☐ Whole Roasting Chicken
- ☐ Quartered Roasting Chicken
- ☐ Whole Fowl (Stewing)
- ☐ *Quartered Fowl*
- ☐ Rock Cornish Broiler
- ☐ Whole Capon
- ☐ Boneless Chicken Breasts
- ☐ Selected Parts for Chicken Fricassee
- ☐ Gourmettes
- ☐ Chicken Livers
- ☐ Chicken Fat
- ☐ Boneless Chicken Breasts with Polynesian Sauce in Aluminum Pan
- ☐ Boneless White Meat Chicken Roast in Aluminum Pan
- ☐ Young Duckling
- ☐ Young Turkey Breasts
- ☐ Young Turkey Legs
- ☐ Young Turkey Wings
- ☐ Young Turkey Drumsticks
- ☐ Whole Young Turkey
- ☐ Boneless White Meat Turkey Breast Roast with Chinese-Style Sauce in Aluminum Pan
- ☐ Boneless Dark Meat Turkey Roast with Chinese-Style Sauce in Aluminum Pan
- ☐ Boneless White Meat Turkey Breast Roast in Aluminum Pan
- ☐ *Boneless White/Dark Meat* Turkey Roast in Alum. Pan
- ☐ Turkey Gizzards
- ☐ Turkey Livers

PRE-COOKED:

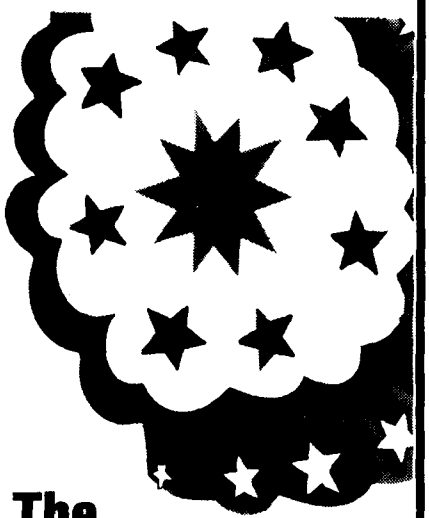
- ☐ Whole Chicken in Barbecue Sauce
- ☐ Cut-Up Half Chicken *in Barbecue Sauce* in Aluminum Pan
- ☐ White Meat Chicken Roll
- ☐ White Meat Chicken Slices
- ☐ Whole Turkey in Barbecue Sauce
- ☐ Boneless Turkey Breast
- ☐ White Meat Turkey Roll
- ☐ Dark Meat Turkey Roll
- ☐ White Meat Turkey Slices
- ☐ Dark Meat Turkey Slices

NON-POULTRY DELICACIES:

- ☐ 6 Kinds of "Knishes"
- ☐ Pizza Pies, 2 Sizes
- ☐ Bagel Pizzas

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books about two troubled societies



The Captain America Complex

The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism

by ROBERT JEWETT. "Provides a discerning examination of America's soul."—*Senator Mark Hatfield.* A brilliant, superbly enlightening, and provocative analysis of the two incompatible strands in America's national ideology — super-righteous patriotism on the one hand, and true prophetic realism on the other. $10t

South African Dialogue

Contrasts in South African Thinking on Basic Race Issues

ed. by NIC RHOODIE. In this remarkable symposium — whose contributors include Alan Paton, Helen Suzman, and many other prominent South Africans—both supporters and foes of apartheid present their views. $12.50

t—price tentative when this ad was prepared

Now at your bookstore

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS
Witherspoon Bldg.,
Phila., Pa. 19107

From the start, Mrs. Jhabvala's happy conviction that she understood India enabled her to see and portray with vitality, affection, and high wit all that is familiar—perhaps universal—in the midst of a culture that was inevitably in its outward trappings not familiar at all. If we think of several of the popular conceptions of India—a vast, dusty undifferentiated mass of poverty and disease, or alternately a mysteriously illumined country of the mind, able (if not always willing) to yield up exquisite, inexpressible wisdom—it is all the more amazing to read Mrs. Jhabvala's funny, spirited, elegantly written accounts of Indian family life: contentious, "modern" children; hovering, food-obsessed mothers; ambitious, newly-rich fathers; sullen, disaffected sons; spoiled rebellious daughters; quarreling aunts and rivalrous in-laws. They have weddings, funerals, and holidays, go to offices, colleges, and cafés, take train trips, go shopping—in short, live their ordinary lives—although they do so against a background that is both physically and culturally entirely different from our own and one that Mrs. Jhabvala never quite omits to set out with the wonder and sharpness of someone whose very exacting eye has just lit on a new world. In her first novel, *Amrita,* Hari, a lazy young man who is the heroine's no-good boyfriend, is languorously eating his dinner:

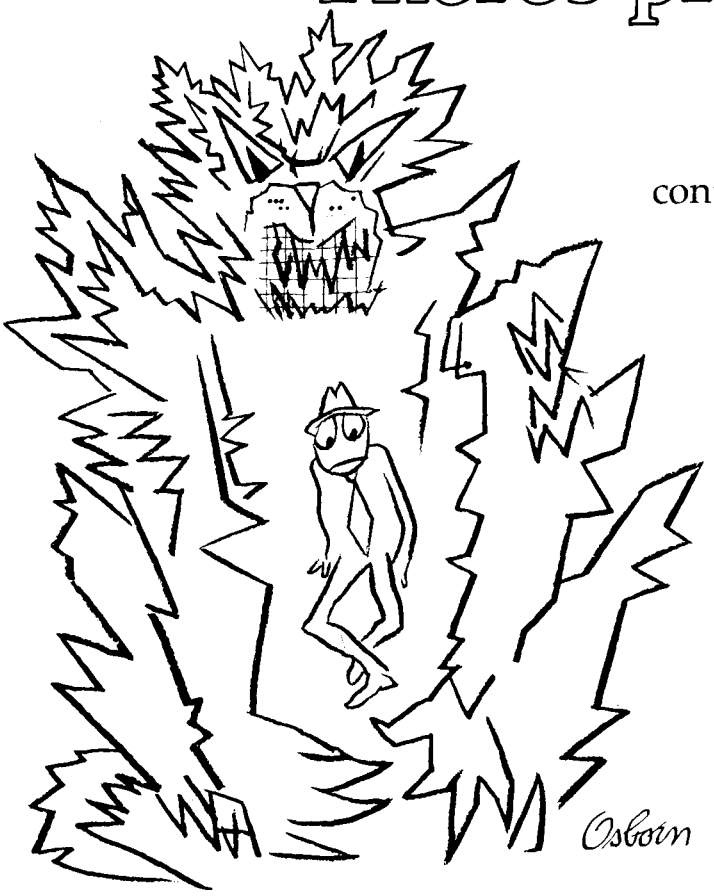
> It was evening and very noisy. The three children were bouncing a ball against the court-yard wall and quarreling as to whose turn it was next, while their mother, milking the cow in the shed, stuck her head out from time to time and threatened to tear them to pieces. The people living on the upper floor were having their usual fight on the stairs. Out in the street a man with huge colored balloons bobbing on a stick was blowing a little tin horn to advertise himself. A car, trying to pass, hooted incessantly, while three women stood in the middle of the road and loudly abused the panwala who sold betel-leaves and Coca-Cola in a little three-sided hut with a straw roof. A few houses away, the inevitable wedding was being celebrated; familiar and sentimental film songs came wailing unendingly through a loudspeaker.

The territory of these novels is largely middle-class New Delhi: self-important politicians court and are courted, enterprising "go-ahead" young men plunge ahead to build factories, servants run in with advice and massages, autocratic clubwomen, perpetually on the telephone, organize lectures on birth control for the poor or arrange teas for international cultural societies. Everyone is always scheming, eating, and talking, especially eating: these books are filled with the sound of onions frying in ghee and the smells of simmering curries and hot chilis. Mrs. Jhabvala's characters recall with guilty nostalgia the mannered elegance of the British Raj, often attempting to maintain it while the rhetoric of idealism and patriotic self-sacrifice rings in their ears. They feel pressed to be "modern"—("You are living in modern times. Go and be modern!" a callow young husband yells at his lonely wife in *Get Ready for Battle*)—though their traditional ways are what they're comfortable with. Always caught between such conflicting claims, their lives and ideas about themselves and the world are marked by self-deception, yet almost none of their decisions or solutions seems stifling or hopeless. Though it would be hard to think of a contemporary writer whose mind or appraising eye is sharper than Mrs. Jhabvala's, her apprehension of people's foibles, dodges, and flaws is always presented with an unusual kind of gentleness and compassion. Her Indian characters, at least, are protected by being Indian, by belonging rightfully to the landscape and society from which they spring.

In the last few years, Mrs. Jhabvala has come to concern herself more with the new breed of foreigners arriving in India—those who "come no longer to conquer but to be conquered," and it is these people who figure primarily in her new novel, *Travelers.* It's no wonder that Mrs. Jhabvala is fascinated by what must now be a familiar, puzzling, phenomenon in

LICENSED TO UN2.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There's plenty of static...



Here's one way to sort out the sense from the sound and sizzle of contemporary events. The New Republic. While we don't claim to have all the answers, our staff does ask many of the right questions, helps you to find out whether

- **a politician's telling the truth**
- **desegregation is working**
- **a best seller's worth reading**
- **a new tax bill is fair**
- **military spending is too high or too low**
- **a movie's worth seeing**
- **an anti-pollution program is fouled up**
- **children learn more in open classrooms**
- **there's hope for television, and where**

Our editors are honestly trying to follow Jefferson's maxim: "Give light and the people will find their way." To help us do that, we call each week on the best independent thinkers we can find—Alexander Bickel (law), Stanley Kauffmann (films), Reed Whittemore (books), John Osborne (White House correspondent and famed "Nixon Watcher"), Walter Pincus and Paul R. Wieck (national politics), Alan Whiting (Far Eastern affairs), David Sanford (environment and consumer affairs) . . . and many more, all probing observants of this bewildering, complex country.

We ask you to become involved with us as we approach the bicentennial year of our nation, to join in the discussion of the issues, the search for better answers, and the effort to put the answers to work. Get acquainted with The New Republic, 30 weeks for $9.95 or $13.75 for 48 weeks. Regular price: $15 per year. For cash payment with the one year offer we will send you free a copy of Walter Lippmann's *Early Writings* (a $7.50 value).

Send me
THE NEW REPUBLIC
for
48 weeks at $13.75 ☐
30 weeks at $ 9.95 ☐

Mail to: Circulation Department
The New Republic
381 W. Center Street
Marion, Ohio 43302

Name_____
Address_____
_____
City_____
State_____ Zip_____
☐ Bill me ☐ Payment enclosed

C-83

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

India, but disappointing to see what she has done with it. Raymond, an uncertainly homosexual Englishman, has come to "experiment" with himself, and Lee, a young American girl "to lose herself . . . in order to find herself." They travel around the country, become involved with Indians of various classes, and have experiences through which, though they do not always know it, they are essentially measuring themselves and being measured against India. The most interesting and vivid of these episodes is Lee's stay in an ashram and her troubled and troubling relationship with the guru, Swamiji—a man whose cruelty, cleverness, and power-hungry manipulations never seem to diminish his holy charm or hypnotic appeal. It is of course the guru who is interesting, not Lee, and this is the major disappointment of the novel: Mrs. Jhabvala's Westerners, alien to the society through which they are passing and out of sight of the ones to which they belong, are neither convincing nor fully created. Either vague or one-dimensional, they lack the subtlety and focus Mrs. Jhabvala so deftly assigns to even her most minor Indian characters. What is best in this book (and there is a great deal) are Indian people, Indian places, and, as always, Indian speech. Her Western characters, initially so blandly filled with illusion, do not become bitter or disillusioned; they could not. They seem merely mildly puzzled; they trickle in and fizzle out. It's as if she believed that Westerners do not have real, whole personalities; or rather, perhaps, that she has lost touch with the Westerner she once was.

But Mrs. Jhabvala's virtues as a writer have not left her, and *Travelers* is still a very good book. Like the Parsi woman saint, Banubai, she has "retained a lively interest in the world and all its passing show." And like the bright-colored pictures of gods who stare out from the walls of grandmothers and aged servants, Mrs. Jhabvala looks out at her characters as if to warn them: they do not realize how much they must struggle against—the vastness of a confused and unyielding history, of India itself.

"An authentic revelation of the Arab mind and character . . . illumines a good deal of what strikes the Westerner as so enigmatic in Arab behavior"
-John Barkham

The Arab Mind

Raphael Patai

"A sympathetic, wide-ranging study of ways in which such fundamental matters as language, child-rearing, and religion have created a typical Arab personality quite divergent from a typical Western personality."
—*The New Yorker* $12.50

SCRIBNERS

International Scholars

THE DIALECTICAL IMAGINATION. By MARTIN JAY. *Little, Brown. 416 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by STANLEY ROTHMAN

ON FEBRUARY 3, 1923 a decree of the Education Ministry marked the official creation of the *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Institute for Social Research) in Frankfurt, Germany. Financed primarily by Felip J. Weil, an Argentine Jew of German descent, the Institute immediately drew to itself a formidable array of intellectual talent. Most of the original members of the Institute—and most of those who came later—were German Jews of upper-middle-class "assimilated" families. Sympathetic to the Marxist Left, they found the German Social Democratic party too timid, but the German Communist party too rigid, for their taste. During the 1920's the major efforts of the group (despite substantial differences among them) involved an effort to revitalize Marxism. They wished to rescue it from the stultification it was undergoing in the Soviet Union, and to provide an analysis of contemporary society which would clarify its direction and perhaps serve as a guide to social action.

Driven from Germany by the Nazi revolution, the Institute's members emigrated to France, England, and the United States, where the great bulk of them settled. Some returned to Germany after World War II. Others remained in the United States as teachers, scholars, and writers. The names of those associated with the Institute at one time or another read like a who's who of international scholarship. Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Karl Wittfogel (one of the few non-Jews affiliated with the Institute), Leo Lowenthal, and others have collectively exercised a tremendous influence on political thinking in both Europe and the United States. During the 1960's at least one of their number, Marcuse, became a leading guru to the New Left.

Martin Jay in *The Dialectical Imagination* has attempted to chronicle the history of the "Frankfurt School" from its founding, through the period of emigration, and to the immediate postwar years. The 1960's are outside his ken, although this is of relatively little importance since most of the ideas which became prominent then had been developed earlier. The volume is essentially a multi-person intellectual biography of leading Institute figures which weaves together the life-history of individual members with an analysis of their work and ideas. Jay has done a remarkable job. The book is skillfully and gracefully written; its intellectual level is high; and, most importantly, it is eminently fair-minded in its discussion of the issues with which it deals. While Jay is clearly sympathetic to the Institute's dominant ideas, he has not hesitated to be critical, and to raise questions where he felt them legitimate.

STANLEY ROTHMAN *is professor of government at Smith College.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jay's study is not easily summarized. Members of the Institute differed from each other in a number of important ways, and their own thinking changed with time. Yet a number of central themes do characterize the work of those affiliated with the Institute. The first has already been mentioned: most of the members of the Institute were hostile to the "bourgeois" democracy of the Weimar Republic. Although they were "para-Marxist" in their thinking, developments in the Soviet Union and the behavior of the German working class had already filled them with a certain pessimism about the utility of traditional Marxist categories. They attempted to understand what had gone wrong through a reexamination of these categories. The reexamination involved a renewed study of Hegel (and the early works of Marx), and an attempt to recapture the "insights" which had been buried in the more "mechanical" interpretation of Engels and the Soviets.

Their analyses led (for the most part) to even greater pessimism concerning the historical role Marx had assigned to the working class as a source of liberation. State capitalism in bourgeois societies and in the Soviet Union had more or less stabilized the former and brought forth new sources of domination in the latter. While most members of the Institute (especially Marcuse) remained cautiously sympathetic to the Soviet experience, feeling that the seeds of liberation were more likely to flower there than in bourgeois societies, they felt that a more radical break with traditional categories of thought was necessary if, indeed, man was to be liberated.

Their pessimism grew rather than diminished with the emergence of the Nazi regime and the emigration of Institute members to America. By the 1950's, indeed, many had all but broken with traditional Marxist analyses of the future, and had come to level a fundamental attack on the whole of European culture. They especially criticized its emphases on rationality and domination, themes which were picked up secondhand by the counter-culture in the

An Unprecedented Event . . . An Unprecedented Publication . . .

ISRAEL 25

ISRAEL 25: A Pictorial Celebration of Israel's 25th Birthday

Now, in its 25th year, the State of Israel reports to the world on its first quarter century. In this magnificent volume—the official publication for the anniversary, published under the patronage of the Central Ministry of Information of the State of Israel—the founders, builders, and defenders of Israel review the country's progress to date. Without complacency, with refreshing candor, and with the pioneering enthusiasm that has spurred Israel from the beginning, they portray the vivid pageant of 25 years of Jewish statehood in all its varied aspects.

The highly informative text is the work of history-making leaders and specialists: Golda Meir, David Ben-Gurion, Yaacov Herzog, Haim Bar-Lev, Ernst D. Bergmann, Benjamin Eliav, David Horowitz.

The text of ISRAEL 25 is magnificently embellished with over 325 full-color and black-and-white photographs that splendidly capture the variety and vigor of the Land and its people. In a stunning fold-out, Jews gather to pray before the Western Wall in Jerusalem; across two pages of photos, the colorful population of the Holy City passes in parade—Jews, Moslems, Christians, young and old; the faces of Israel, from the "four corners of the earth" shine forth in all their diversity—Yemenite, Bukharan, Russian, Western European, American, Sabra; the pulsing rhythms of Tel Aviv's boulevards fairly leap off the page; the joys of a wedding, the solemnity of a religious festival, the dignity of labor, all and more find pictorial realization.

The volume is further enhanced by a 19-page, comprehensive calendar of events from 1948 through 1972 which, year by year, month by month, and day by day carry the reader through the highlights of Israel's stirring history.

For a significant remembrance of this momentous occasion in Jewish life, ISRAEL 25 is unsurpassed. Eloquent and splendid, it is a volume you will always cherish.

9½" x 12¾"
325 photographs in color and black and white

$17.95

Jewish Book Club
165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022

Please send ____ copies of ISRAEL 25 published at $17.95. My check for $_____ is enclosed. (The Jewish Book Club pays all packing and shipping costs.)

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

United States and acted out during the 1960's both here and in Germany. Some of the members of the Institute, at least, were dismayed by this experience, and Adorno, in his last years, under sharp attack by German students, plaintively noted that he had not expected his writing to lead to the making of Molotov cocktails. Others were more ambivalent. Marcuse, for example, saw much that was positive in the student movement, while condemning certain of its "excesses."

ONE of the greatest theoretical efforts of the Frankfurt school, beginning in the 1920's, and reaching some sort of culmination in Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization*, was the attempt to combine elements of Marxism with psychoanalysis. The effort led in two directions. Erich Fromm, while retaining his belief in the unconscious and a dynamic concept of personality, eventually abandoned much of Freud, including (critically) libido theory. Most of the Institute's members did not take this course, however, and indeed Marcuse and Fromm engaged in a bitter debate on the issue in the 1950's, Marcuse charging Fromm with paving the way for further conformism and domination. The position taken by Marcuse was to accept Freud's argument that sexual and death drives were basic, but to argue that "surplus" repression had given greater reign to the latter than to the former. With the end of scarcity, however, it would be possible to put a close to the hegemony of the "performance principle" and genital sexuality and usher in a period of "polymorphous perversity" and the reign of eros. At the moment, a bowdlerized version of Marcuse's views is still popular on the Left, providing justification for many of the assumptions current in the counterculture, the more radical segment of the women's movement, and gay liberation.

THEORETICAL discussions of the relation between psychoanalysis and social structure were not the only ways in which Institute members attempted to use Freud's insights. Perhaps the most important single contribution to American social science made by them was the concept of the "authoritarian personality." Supported by a grant from the American Jewish Committee, Adorno and other Institute members, along with American collaborators, undertook a massive study of anti-Semitism and the potential for fascism in America. The results were published in 1950.

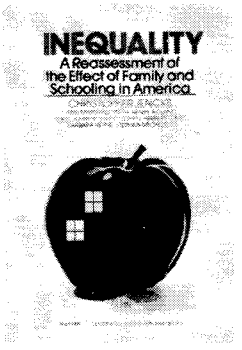
The emphasis of *The Authoritarian Personality* was on empirical investigation. Nevertheless, Institute members had brought their own preconceptions to the work, and many of the ideas with which this study was informed had already been developed in earlier studies of the German worker, in which the authoritarian personality had been compared with the revolutionary. Partly to fit in better with the American milieu, the latter type now became the "democratic" personality. It is hardly surprising, then, that authoritarians, by and large, turned out to be conservatives, while those on the Left were usually "democrats." In retrospect it seems clear that the instruments used in compiling data for *The Authoritarian Personality*, while they tapped right-wing authoritarianism, were not designed to explore the same phenomenon among radicals of the Left. In fact, the authoritarianism scale which the study developed was basically an exercise in circular reasoning: conservatism was made to equal authoritarianism almost by definition.

Despite the critiques leveled against *The Authoritarian Personality* and its biases, the scales developed by Institute workers (and others derived from them) have continued to play an important role in social-science research in this country. Nor has any new measure of authoritarianism come into widespread use which completely eliminates the bias of the original.

The influence enjoyed by the Institute's study among social scientists undoubtedly reflected American anti-fascist reaction to the experience of World War II. It also reflected, however, a major ethnic shift then taking place in the social-science profession, i.e., the increasing role in sociology and social psychology being played by liberal American Jews who shared, in milder form, many of the assumptions of the Frankfurt school. And this raises another issue. Jay is not especially concerned with understanding the sources of the Frankfurt school's thinking. It is clear, though, that most of the members reflected in their thinking a particular German upper-middle-class background. Their penchant for a certain kind of theoretical approach—solving "empirical" problems by first defining the nature of man and "true understanding" and proceeding from there—is itself peculiarly German, and in following such modes of thought, Institute members were influenced by the whole history of German idealism. Their background is indicated also by their distaste for popular American culture and the "sweatiness" of the common man—a disdain which served them as a basis for criticizing contemporary society and arguing for a new, "higher" social order.

now in paperback

INEQUALITY



A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America

by

CHRISTOPHER JENCKS

CN/334 $2.95

For a complete catalog, write
Harper & Row
Paperback Dept.
10 E. 53d St., New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Perspectives On

ISRAEL

And The

MIDDLE EAST

From

Transaction Books

Plus a forthcoming book on the Jewish poverty in the United States

ISRAEL: SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CHANGE

Edited by Michael Curtis and Mordecai S. Chertoff

The fullest and most up-to-date book on social and political change in this fascinating country, this volume deals with urban and institutional development, the role and the place of the kibbutz today, economic development, income distribution, labor relations, ethnic relationships and problems, the role of women, changes in education, population problems and Arab-Jewish relationships in Israel. These original essays by prominent writers are packed with incisive analysis in jargon-free language.

460 pages. Cloth $15.00 (ISBN 550801)
Paper $4.95 (ISBN 555757)

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES IN ISRAEL

Edited by Moshe Lissak and Emanuel Gutmann

The foundations of Israeli society were laid long before the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Many of its present day characteristics had their beginnings in the *Yishuv*, the Jewish population in Palestine. The national leadership which grew in the *Yishuv* during the period of British rule led the struggle for independence and is still in office. Beginning with a study of the *Yishuv* the editors present the best of recent interpretive writings on some of the more elusive internal elements of Israeli politics.

350 pages. Cloth $15.00 (ISBN 550917)
Paper $4.95 (ISBN 555838).

POOR JEWS: An American Awakening

Edited by Naomi Levine and Martin Hochbaum

The distinctive characteristics of Jewish poverty in the United States—its particular age groups, geographical locations, special needs and problems—are considered in this volume. The essays attempt to bring forth a wider awareness that poor Jews exist, to discuss responses of Jews and the government to the Jewish poor, and to suggest changes that hopefully will enable all poor people to live more fulfilling lives.

275 pages. Cloth $12.95 (ISBN 550739) Paper $3.45 (ISBN 555706)

PEOPLE AND POLITICS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Edited by Michael Curtis

A unique intellectual confrontation among Arab, Israeli and Western viewpoints, these original essays include statements of eminent contemporary scholars on the Arab-Israeli conflict, its background, and the prognosis for peace. It clarifies major issues at stake for all parties, and undertakes a comprehensive evaluation of the political, economic and demographic sources of the claims made by all the major combatants. Transcending rhetoric, the volume represents an important first step toward outlining how hostilities can be resolved without provoking a major war involving the Big Powers. Contributors include Don Peretz, Hugh Smythe, Jon Kimche, Shlomo Avineri, Fred Khouri, Abdul Saïd, Amos Perlmutter and others.

335 pages. Cloth $8.95 (ISBN 550003)
Paper $3.95 (ISBN 555005)

Please send the following Transaction Books:

	Cloth	Paper	Price
_____	☐	☐	_____
_____	☐	☐	_____

(Enclosed is my check for $_____)

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

C-11

MAIL TO E.P. Dutton
201 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10003

ta

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

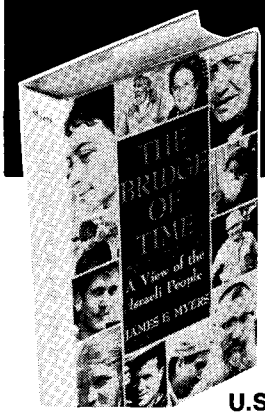
What else can we say of their background? Jay raises the question of the Jewishness of most Institute members. Except in the case of a few (Erich Fromm, for example) the men themselves not only denied the relevance of this fact, but even the reality of German anti-Semitism. They considered themselves radical intellectuals of a universal type, rather than Jews. Jay feels, nevertheless, that the Jewish background of the members must have played some role in their thinking, and examines briefly the relation between their ideas and aspects of the Jewish tradition. He fails, however, to establish any real connections. Yet it is quite obvious, in the very denials of Institute members themselves, that a desire was at work, both in their lives and in the modes of thought to which they were most attracted, to end the remnants of felt marginality. Marxism and psychoanalysis both served the same function for Institute members in this regard, for both systems deny the reality of cultural differences, affirming instead a universal ideology applicable across cultures and across ethnic lines. What better way to end one's marginality than by undermining the categories that define one as marginal?

Unfortunately the intellectual tools chosen to overcome marginality never seem to work out in practice. Once European Communist parties became large movements they absorbed, through their membership, most of the prejudices which, theoretically, should have had no place in such parties. In Germany, at least, the counter-culture seems likely to follow the same route. After having played such an important role in developing the categories which gave the counter-culture a measure of intellectual respectability, Adorno should perhaps have perceived that the radical German students who harassed him in the late 1960's bore a distinct psychological resemblance to those who had shouted for his blood in the late 1920's. Only the rhetoric had changed.

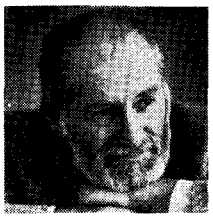
Rich in Politics, Human Emotion, History. Blunt, Candid!

THE BRIDGE OF TIME

A View of the Israeli People **by James E. Myers**



A fascinating book of random conversations with ordinary Israeli citizens. From the Golan Heights to Eilat the author roamed, avoiding official spokesmen, seeking the unbiased citizen who speaks freely, unaffectedly. As the Israeli talks, the reader begins to see who he was, is, hopes to be and what he thinks of his government, politics, religion, America, Russia, the world. Intriguing revelations!



U.S. Senator Charles Percy says: "The approach is unique . . . will help others to know what life is like for Israelis."

Dr. A. L. Sachar, Chancellor of Brandeis University says: "He concentrates on the Israelis . . . and his interviews are blunt, candid, and felicitously reported."

Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, editor of SH'MA says: "Fascinating, engaging . . . rich in politics, human emotion, history."

$6.95. At your bookseller or direct from:

A. S. Barnes & Co., Inc., Dept. C113
Cranbury, N.J. 08512

Please rush me _____ copy (ies) of **The Bridge of Time** @ $6.95 per copy plus 25¢ postage & handling. Enclosed is my check or M.O. for $_____.

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Counter-Pastoral

THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY. By RAYMOND WILLIAMS. *Oxford University Press. 335 pp. $9.75.*

Reviewed by ALAN GOLDFEIN

EARLY in *The Country and the City* Raymond Williams quotes a couplet by George Crabbe (from *The Village,* 1783):

No longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain,
But own the Village Life a life of pain.

The lines—written during the modern world's most transforming experience, the English Industrial Revolution—are an apology for pastoral poetry's idyllic picture of the countryside. What so outraged Crabbe—and one may substitute Williams here—was the "escalator" effect of literature in its nostalgic glances toward the land as Eden. "Escalator," because for each writer looking back to a happier time there has always been someone a generation earlier who saw those same years as hard, and who then proceeded to look back through another deluding mist to his own bucolic youth; until, backward in time, beyond Hesiod, we reach the top (or bottom) floor of, indeed, Eden.

It is not Williams's point that country life has always been less than perfect bliss, though surely that is true. He asserts, rather, that the picture of a Utopia in Nature has been "a myth functioning as a memory," conjuring up false Golden Ages in the past. And, to the extent that contemporary conditions warp our view of the past, they prevent us from dealing honestly with and improving the present. In *The Country and the City* Williams explores the images of the rural and urban worlds in English literature since the 16th century and shows how certain ones have persisted while others have changed. His literary examples and observations tend to support his historical interpretation: that there has been no boundary line, no sharp dichotomy between town and country; that capitalism—"the

ALAN GOLDFEIN's *novel,* Heads, *has recently been issued by Morrow.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cruel economy"—did not come from the outside and destroy a manorial Utopia presided over by benevolent "rural patrons," but that the seeds of urbanism and commercialism were sown by the rural aristocracy itself.

In the 16th century, early mercantile enclosures were launching that process of depopulation which by the 19th century had created a large industrial labor force. Williams shows how this great change affected literature: the pastoral idyllic escape was transposed to a nonexistent world—sometimes in the past, sometimes not—where there could be no "cruel tension" between two aspects of reality, as there had been earlier, even as far back as Virgil, or Hesiod. Writers, on the whole, refused to accept the actual causes and conditions of change, especially the role of the country aristocracy. As Williams puts it:

> . . . A fault can . . . occur in the whole ordering of a mind. Defense of a "vanishing countryside"—"the open air," "the life of the fields"—can become deeply confused with that defense of the old rural order which is in any case being expressed by the landlords, the rentiers, and their literary sympathizers. A physical hatred of the noise and rush of the city can be converted . . . to a powerful but acrid vision of the metropolis reclaimed by the swamp and the reappearance of a woodland feudal society.

The country thus became Eden, modernity was rejected, and, ultimately, allusions to a Golden Age served to justify the existing social order.

This continued, Williams shows, into the 18th century. By then, however, the spirit of the middle classes had pervaded England's countryside to such an extent that to praise an unreal natural world while at the same time defending its proprietors in the real one, poetry had to jettison the aristocratic order and welcome the one scientifically landscaped by the technical and improvement-oriented bourgeoisie. With Pope, for example, there is the "creation rather than the celebration of Nature."

But soon Williams sees poetry taking another direction with the emergence of what he calls "transitional man." In the work of writers like Goldsmith, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and others there now appears a sense of Romantic loss. Where before the poet had looked at the countryside and seen "Ye country houses and Retreat,/Which all the happy Gods so Love," now the poet looks at the landscape and sees a desert: "Creation is 'stinted,' the brook is 'choked,' the cry of the bittern is 'hollow,' and the lapwing's cries 'unvaried.' " As Williams explains it, since the 16th century the "social condition of poetry" had been to give a false picture of contemporary life by employing idyllic tones of the past. The newer poets, however, not only write of a perfect past which never existed, they do so with a tragic sense of loss, since they have seen the cottages and fields of their childhood destroyed by the backlash of the improving spirit. Thus the tradition of the "counter-pastoral" is created. Even when, with Wordsworth and John Clare, there comes an affirmation of a living "Humanity" existing within the landscape of loss, it is made by a turning inward into the "Eden of the heart." Escape is still into that untouchable Nature, but now it is recognized as being someplace within ourselves, and in our spiritual community with others. By the 19th century the community that Williams as political economist and sociologist so desperately wants to see achieved is yearned for, but it is not yet located in the real world.

For most men, the "real world" would mean the city; the symbol of capitalist production, labor, domicile, exploitation—itself symbolized by the novel. The city altered men's relationship to men and to things, and it altered, therefore, the ways in which men expressed themselves. It forced upon the writer the consciousness of largeness, variety, velocity, and their inevitable counterpoint, loneliness. It is in the novels of the city that the dark back of the mirror of country life is held up. With Dickens and Hardy, and later with Wells and Joyce, there is the same sense that came to Wordsworth and Clare; a feeling of possible harmony, an intimation of

"A devastating critique of the liberal, and an insightful analysis of coalition politics in America. This is New Left writing at its best and most promising."
—Eqbal Ahmad, Institute for Policy Studies

"Meticulously researched, sprightly written, and a piercing analysis of what lies ahead for America." —Sidney Lens

LEFT TURN

Origins of the Next American Revolution

by Richard E. Rubinstein

$8.50 at all bookstores
Little, Brown

There is no energy shortage

for the sun will shine another 50 billion years, US oil (including shale) deposits exceed those of the Middle East, clean gas can be refined from coal, and breeder reactors will never run out of nuclear fuel.

But the access to that energy is blocked by environmental hysteria, anti-technology sentiment, and interference in free markets. Construction of nuclear plants is delayed by environmental suits, oil and gas exploration is stunted by government controls, scientific research is underfunded (the welfare budget of New York alone is now bigger than the entire budget of NASA!). Even worse, the US now courts disaster by importing 20% of its oil demand from unstable Arab dictatorships, many of them deeply beholden to the Soviets.

You can now *keep informed* of new developments in this vital field of new energy sources and the lack of access to them by subscribing to our pro-science, pro-technology, pro-free enterprise monthly newsletter.

Our staff is not only technically expert in energy matters, but also expert in explaining technological points to laymen. And we report on the political-economic background of the pertinent technology, too.

Comparable newsletters cost from $25 to over $100; yet an annual subscription to ours costs only $6. Please subscribe today. (Should you mistrust the low price, you need not risk $6; we will send you a free sample on request.)

ACCESS TO ENERGY
Box 2298, Boulder, Colorado 80302

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

imminent community among the isolated and populous souls. But now it is no longer a case of country versus city, of good versus evil, but of the modern world. Or, of the world-to-be.

WILLIAMS'S historical viewpoint, fused out of the materials of an immensively impressive knowledge of literature, a personal commitment, and a sophisticated sort of impressionism, is similar to that of the most respectable social and economic historians of England, men like R. H. Tawney and others who rely for their evidence less on belles-lettres and more on manorial records, game-preserve records, the prices of timber, grains, beer, bread. To the extent that Williams extends their argument, with evidence from the history of literature, he does a great service. His work is especially valuable as an antidote to those writers of today who continue to regard the city and technology as synonymous with evil and still search for a mythical ideal in the hills and woodlands and rivers and valleys; these writers refuse to see the countryside, as Williams does, as part of the total system of work, prices, and wages.

But in his search for a real community which will combine the most democratic elements of town and country—progress with personal concern—Williams is also something of a romantic. He is, in fact, himself a microcosm of the history he writes about. He was born and grew up in the country, and, as a young man, went to Cambridge, where he learned "culture" —a discipline, a way of life, usually considered urban. Williams knows first-hand the experience of the transitional man (it was the subject of his excellent work, *Culture and Society*)—the agony of separation from roots, the conflict of values, the hesitant (and certainly guilt-provoking) adoption of urban ways, the sense of loss of the past. Williams knows more of the countryside than Jane Austen did, more than George Eliot; yet, being an academic, caught in the borderland (which also caught Hardy and Lawrence), wanting to talk about what is and what must be done, he is forced, still, to rely on just what the countryman in him mocks: "sociology."

The result is that *The Country and the City* is two books: an excellent one about literature and ideas, and a smaller sociological one that is jargon-laden and not so good. The irony is that the conclusions drawn from knowledgeable insights in the one lead to romantic oversights in the other (or even more paradoxically, the reverse: the romantic impulse leads to excellent scholarship). Thus, when Williams talks of the creation of a new world, a better community, "directness," "connection," "mutuality," "sharing," of life as an integrated, organic whole, what he does in effect is to create a counter-pastoral of his own. And as for the practical means of achieving his hoped-for community—one which will combine the "evergreen" with the factory—the suggestions he offers are so vague as to be nearly meaningless. There is, in fact, more than a trace in all this of what has come to be considered a peculiarly American malaise: intellectual anti-intellectualism. It is, in a way, refreshing to spot it in a brilliant and intellectually rigorous Cantabrigian.

The Red and the Black

TOMS, COONS, MULATTOES, MAMMIES, AND BUCKS: AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF BLACKS IN AMERICAN FILMS. By DONALD BOGLE. *Illustrated. Viking. 260 pp. $12.50.*

THE ONLY GOOD INDIAN . . . THE HOLLYWOOD GOSPEL. By RALPH and NATASHA FRIAR. *Illustrated. Drama Book Specialists. 332 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by RICHARD SCHICKEL

THE distinctions between these two books are infinitely more important than their similarities. Both are studies of the ways in which the two most significant American racial minorities have been treated—or rather mistreated—in commercial American films. But Mr. Bogle's "interpretive history" is a model of how a literate, reasonable, and readable critical survey should be conducted. He is moderate but keen in his judgments, sensible in his choice of works for close analysis, his well-organized and gracefully written book is persuasively grounded in historical and biographical facts—and in an intelligent interpretation of the small society (Hollywood) that produced these movies and the larger one that more or less unthinkingly consumed them.

The kindest thing to say about the Friars' study is that it is everything Mr. Bogle's is not. Having forced my way through it, however, I find my supply of kindness entirely expended on the journey. Wearily, I must place it among the most vulgar, ignorant and shrill volumes I have ever read on any subject, a travesty of accepted standards of critical and historical discourse. Essentially an undifferentiated list of all the movies (including silent one- and two-reelers from prehistoric days) that have in some way dealt with "Native Americans" (as the authors drearily insist on calling them), it is annotated with extensive, unilluminating quotations from bad critics (almost as numerous as bad movies), practically none from the good ones. Everything is whipped into single file aimed at establishing a single point: that our movies about Indians have universally been racist in spirit, genocidal in intent. If that is all a writer has to say on a complex and curious matter, it is a waste of energy to go to this length to say it.

IT IS perhaps fair to note that there are historical circumstances rendering the Friars' task more difficult than that of Mr. Bogle. For one thing, Indians happened to be participants in a drama—the settlement of the frontier—peculiarly suited to the movie medium, with its built-in bias toward large-scale and violent action, and one which has also taken a firmer grip on the popular imagination than any other phenomenon in our history. The sheer volume of material they are forced to confront is, to say the least, daunting. Where

---

RICHARD SCHICKEL *reviews movies for* Time, *is producing "The Men Who Made the Movies" for WNET-TV, and is the author of a forthcoming study of Douglas Fairbanks, Sr.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

COMMENTARY REPORTS, now in use as texts at over 300 colleges and universities, are prized for the clarity and expertise they bring to bear in analyzing current issues and placing them in meaningful perspective. The authors of these Reports, all leading authorities in their respective fields, are among today's most stimulating thinkers and writers.

THE CITY

- ☐ THE FAILURE OF URBAN RENEWAL: A CRITIQUE AND SOME PROPOSALS by Herbert J. Gans
- ☐ UP FROM APATHY—THE WOODLAWN EXPERIMENT by Charles E. Silberman
- ☐ POVERTY PROBLEMS by Daniel P. Moynihan
- ☐ THE NEW YORK SCHOOL CRISIS by Maurice J. Goldbloom
- ☐ THE BETRAYAL OF THE AMERICAN CITY by David Danzig & John Feild

WORLD AFFAIRS

- ☐ THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY by John Mander
- ☐ THE FUTURE OF CAPITALISM by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ SOCIALISM AND THE FUTURE by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ THE LEGACY OF CHE GUEVARA by Norman Gall
- ☐ "BONN IS NOT WEIMAR": REFLECTIONS ON THE RADICAL RIGHT IN GERMANY by Walter Laqueur
- ☐ THE SPECTER OF WEIMAR by Theodore Draper
- ☐ THE FALL OF EUROPE? by Walter Laqueur

- ☐ IMPERIALISM by George Lichtheim 60 pages Includes Study Guide **$2.25**

- ☐ CHINESE VISIONS & AMERICAN POLICIES by Benjamin Schwartz
- ☐ THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE by Marjorie Housepian
- ☐ LATIN AMERICA: THE CHURCH MILITANT by Norman Gall

- ☐ THE DOMINICAN REVOLT by Theodore Draper. New 208-page paperback based on his Administration-shaking article in Commentary. **$3.95**

- ☐ FIVE YEARS OF CASTRO'S CUBA by Theodore Draper
- ☐ CHINA'S STRATEGY: A CRITIQUE: by Donald S. Zagoria

AMERICAN POLITICS

- ☐ THE NEW POLITICS & THE DEMOCRATS by Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik
- ☐ THE QUESTION OF REPRESSION by Walter Goodman
- ☐ THE SHAPE OF AMERICAN POLITICS by Richard N. Goodwin
- ☐ IS ELECTORAL REFORM THE ANSWER? by Alexander M. Bickel
- ☐ COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY AMERICA by Robert L. Heilbroner
- ☐ POLITICS & ACLU by Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.
- ☐ THE NEW LEFT AND ITS LIMITS by Nathan Glazer
- ☐ WHO NEEDS THE LIBERALS? by Penn Kemble
- ☐ BIG BUSINESS & THE DEMOCRATS by David T. Bazelon
- ☐ THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY by Alan F. Westin
- ☐ AMERICA AFTER VIETNAM by Edmund Stillman
- ☐ WHAT'S LEFT? by Roger Starr
- ☐ A GUIDE TO REAGAN COUNTRY: The Political Culture of Southern California by James Q. Wilson
- ☐ THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY: A DEFECTIVE INSTITUTION? by Marcus Cunliffe

INTERRELIGIOUS

- ☐ CHURCH AND STATE: HOW HIGH A WALL? by Milton Himmelfarb
- ☐ THE TRIAL OF JESUS by Paul Winter
- ☐ VATICAN II & THE JEWS by F. E. Cartus
- ☐ THE JEWS: HOW WE ARE by Milton Himmelfarb

ISSUES OF RACE

- ☐ THE BLACK PANTHERS by Tom Milstein
- ☐ "BLACK POWER" AND COALITION POLITICS by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ IN DEFENSE OF "BLACK POWER" by David Danzig
- ☐ THE WATTS "MANIFESTO" & THE McCONE REPORT by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ MUTUAL AID AND THE NEGRO by John Slawson
- ☐ THE MEANING OF NEGRO STRATEGY by David Danzig
- ☐ THE NEGRO & THE NEW YORK SCHOOLS by Midge Decter
- ☐ FROM PROTEST TO POLITICS: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ THE LESSONS OF THE LONG HOT SUMMER by Bayard Rustin
- ☐ MY NEGRO PROBLEM—AND OURS by Norman Podhoretz

SOCIAL ISSUES

- ☐ IS BUSING NECESSARY? by Nathan Glazer
- ☐ DOES IQ MATTER? by David K. Cohen
- ☐ THE POPULATION CONTROLLERS by Samuel McCracken
- ☐ THE NON-GENERATION GAP by S. M. Lipset & Earl Raab
- ☐ THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN BONDS by Selma Fraiberg
- ☐ THE LIBERATED WOMAN by Midge Decter
- ☐ THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF HERBERT MARCUSE by George Kateb

- ☐ STUDENT REVOLTS by Diana Trilling **$1.00**

- ☐ THE DRUGS OF HABIT & THE DRUGS OF BELIEF by Samuel McCracken
- ☐ YOUTH MOVEMENTS by Walter Laqueur
- ☐ THE POVERTY OF AFFLUENCE by Robert Lekachman

- ☐ QUACKERY IN THE CLASSROOM by Samuel McCracken **75 cents**

- ☐ A CERTAIN ANXIETY by Norman Podhoretz **15 cents**
- ☐ AUTHENTICITY and the MODERN UNCONSCIOUS by Lionel Trilling
- ☐ THE LIMITS OF SOCIAL POLICY by Nathan Glazer
- ☐ APOCALYPTIC THINKING by Samuel McCracken

To order mail coupon to COMMENTARY REPORTS, 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

PRICE: 50c each (except as noted). Minimum order $3.00.* Discount 20% on orders for 25 or more shipped to one address (single Report or assorted titles). POSTAGE AND HANDLING: 50c per order. Allow 21 days for delivery, or add 50c extra for faster mail service.

QUANTITY	TITLE (Please use a separate sheet of paper for additional reports)	PRICE

Price of Reports	$
Less 20% discount for 25 or more	
SUBTOTAL	
Parcel Post	.50
Optional: Add 50c for faster mail service	
TOTAL	

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ Enter my subscription to Commentary Magazine
☐ One Year $12.00 ☐ 6 Months $7.00
☐ Please Bill Me ☐ Check Enclosed

*Prepayment is not necessary for institutional or corporate orders $3.00 minimum

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mr. Bogle can cover his subject by studying a hundred movies, they must deal with thousands.

Moreover—and this is the point the Friars, and for that matter most contemporary writers on this subject, fail to consider—the Indian was part of a strange, indeed enigmatic, culture that, since the 18th century, had been in inevitable, active, and often savage opposition to the spread of the white man's culture. One does not argue, of course, that the latter was necessarily a superior culture (except in the purely technological sense) or that, in its arrogance, it made any worthwhile attempt to understand its enemy or to work out a peaceful, rational accommodation with the Indians. Its record of massacre, theft, and general duplicitousness is painfully obvious and has been so—even to those who made Western movies—for decades. On the other hand, the American pioneer of the last century was not a 20th-century cultural anthropologist—or even a liberal. He was simply a man in need of vast amounts of land for his agricultural economy and, having seen the great plains of the West, unlikely to be very sensitive to the needs of nomadic cultures for the large stretches of the same land to support their own way of life. Indeed, with the best will in the world, it is difficult to see how this conflict over what might be termed land use could have been avoided, especially given the barriers of language and custom existing between whites and reds. Doubtless a deal of racism arose out of this circumstance, but to understand the Indian wars as solely an expression of racism, or of a genocidal impulse, is disastrously to oversimplify the matter. This was, profoundly, a cultural conflict—and very possibly an unavoidable one.

THE Friars would also have it that the failure of film to particularize Indian characters, as well as the failure to be accurate about their dress, language, and customs, stems from the same racism that produced the historical conflicts Hollywood symbolically recreates. Again, in some indeterminate measure they are partly correct. But historical accuracy and full characterization have never been the medium's strong suits. All of us have serious grievances in this regard, no matter what our race or class or birthplace. In fact, however, as even the Friars admit, many of the Indian stereotypes are quite benign ones—on the whole far less patronizing than the black stereotypes Mr. Bogle describes. Indeed, in movies Indians seem generally to be rather distant and abstract characters, less stereotypes than symbols—conventionalized human projections of the frightening power of the wilderness the whites felt compelled to conquer. The argument that it is time to abandon such symbolization, time for popular culture to deal realistically with the Indian culture as it really is and was, is unimpeachable. But, really, people like the Friars must begin by understanding such simple distinctions as the one between stereotype and symbol before they can fairly criticize the work of the moviemakers.

And to be truly persuasive, of course, they must give some evidence of having actually seen and freshly interpreted their material. They dismiss, for example, the 1944 *Buffalo Bill* as "a pedestrian attempt to sanctify" the title character, when, in fact, the movie is also, and more significantly, a long and quite moving plea for peace and understanding between the races, including, early on, a powerful scene in which an Indian woman specifically and vehemently rejects a liberal-minded attempt to impose white "civilization" on her and her people. It could have been written yesterday, and fair-minded critics more interested in truth than polemics would have devoted more than a few shoddy lines to this interesting film. Another example: *Northwest Passage* is correctly described as a film about a punitive expedition that historically wiped out the Abenaki tribe, but the Friars fail to note that in this 1940 film the humane and gifted King Vidor, in shooting the final massacre, turned it into a

New from Yale

Opening Up the Suburbs

An Urban Strategy for America

by Anthony Downs

"A complex and ambitious book which correctly recognizes the importance of achieving economic integration in our suburban areas. Downs does not minimize the political difficulties nor ridicule the suburbanite's concern for property values. Instead, he tries — and generally succeeds — to fashion an integration strategy which meets these objections squarely." — *The Washington Monthly* $7.95

Children's Television

The Economics of Exploitation

by William Melody

In this study, commissioned by Action for Children's Television in Boston, Mr. Melody demonstrates clearly that as long as advertisers control programming it will respond to their own vested interests and not the needs of the child.
paper $1.95 cloth $7.95

Yale University Press New Haven and London

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tragic and terrible indictment of the very crime that so exercises the authors—genocide. His imagery carefully undercuts the script's implication that a heroic triumph was being enacted here.

One could extend the list of carelessnesses and stupidities in *The Only Good Indian* indefinitely. They are what result when heavy thumbs are applied to the historical scale. Setting out to prove the thesis that white attitudes toward the Indian are irredeemably racist, the authors refuse to consider—or else contemptuously dismiss—all significant attempts by the guilty liberal conscience (which came to Hollywood when the sound track did) to reverse previous attitudes, refuse to concede the difference between cheap B pictures and serials and the more thoughtfully wrought major films of the sound era. The result is a book that is one-dimensional, hysterical, and useless as scholarship or criticism—and therefore useless also to a good cause.

MR. BOGLE, who is black and therefore entitled to a larger sense of outrage than the Friars (who are not "Native Americans"), has the discipline and thoughtfulness to resist the easy impulse. It must, of course, be emphasized that the blacks live a little closer to the center of American life than the Indians, which means that a somewhat wider range of roles—and larger roles, at that—have been available to them. Moreover, since slavery effectively destroyed their culture and since they rarely passed over into armed warfare against the whites, their representation in the movies has been quite different from that of the Indians; they have rarely been shown as either mysterious exotics or as savages, noble or otherwise. Partial familiarity bred, in their case, contemptuous stereotypes; and though Mr. Bogle is properly withering about those, he is also aware that, however bad they were, they at least provided black men and women with sizable roles to play in a wide range of films—a range that was unavailable to Indian performers. Where such roles exist, the possibility for talented performers to transcend,

YEATS

Yeats: A Psychoanalytic Study. *Brenda S. Webster.* "One of the best books yet written on Yeats, and one of the few critical works I know that make a just and sensible use of psychoanalytic concepts for the reading of poetry."—*Harold Bloom.* This extraordinary book traces the intricate connections between the traumatic memories of Yeats's childhood and certain recurring patterns and themes in his work, from the early *Oisin* to *A Vision* and the Byzantium poems. The result is a consistent, impressively documented, and original view of the workings of the poet's mind. $8.95

POUND & ELIOT

The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. *William M. Chace.* Pound and Eliot had their own highly complex views of the politics and the political alternatives of their time. For both men, as this book demonstrates—and perhaps for all sensitive writers in an age characterized above all by political struggle—political attitudes were intrinsic to their sense of themselves. Previous studies of their poetry have ignored their politics as either deplorable or irrelevant. In this work, politics is central to a re-examination of their careers and their major works. November. About $8.95

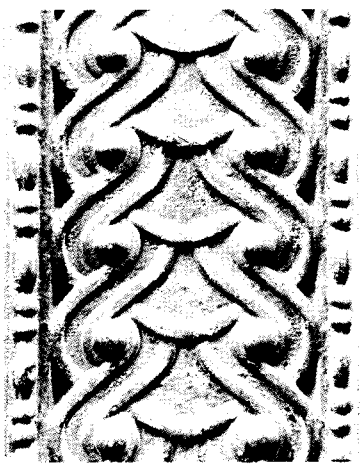
STANFORD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"THE BIG SEND-OFF"

. . . is the heading *New York* magazine gave its Best Bets column on this unique series of postcards showing details of New York City's landmark buildings. Seven jumbo cards in superb color, three in velvety black-and-white gravure, faithfully reproduce original photographs by Mark Feldstein. The subjects include the lantern at the Players Club, a terra cotta panel on New York's only Louis Sullivan building, an angel overlooking City Hall from 150 Nassau Street, and a sampling of elegant stone and cast iron ornament that generally goes unobserved.

Use the cards for invitations, greeting cards, any correspondence you want to be remembered. Many people frame them. Packet of 20 cards (two each of ten subjects) only $3.



Cranford Wood, Inc.
310 East 75 St., NYC 10021

I enclose $_____ for _____ packs of postcards at $3 per pack (including tax, postage, and handling).

name

address

city, state & zip

to humanize, stereotypes also exists, and Mr. Bogle is both sympathetic about the problem and correctly and enthusiastically appreciative of actors and actresses who achieved this transcendence—Nina Mae McKinney, Hattie McDaniel, Rex Ingram, Butterfly McQueen, to name just a few. He even has kind and intelligent words—properly so—about performers whose reputations have perhaps been unfairly discounted by a new, more militant, generation of commentators—Stepin Fetchit, Rochester, Bojangles. And, throughout, he demonstrates a compassionate understanding of how difficult it was, until recently, for black dramatic actors (Canada Lee, Juano Hernandez, James Edwards) to develop and sustain careers their gifts entitled them to, given the erratic nature of Hollywood's concern with subject matter in which they might find work that was worthy of them.

He is aware that many of the movies of the 30's and early 40's, when black roles were the most heavily stereotypical, were also movies that, on the whole, have stood the test of time better than the later films in which a self-conscious "awareness" of blacks as "problem people" (Mr. Bogle's term) deadened everyone's creative force. After all, given a choice, who wouldn't rather see *Cabin in the Sky* than *Home of the Brave*? Isn't Hernandez a more interesting actor than Sidney Poitier, Rochester a more challenging theatrical presence than Sammy Davis, Jr.? Mr. Bogle certainly implies as much—and with that particular energy that comes to a critic engaged in the process of rediscovery and revaluation.

He understands, of course, that the "problem people" fulfilled a necessary social and educational function—and helped the Hollywood liberals to ease their guilty consciences—whatever their artistic value. Indeed, though he is slightly more ambiguous on this point than on others, he seems to feel that they were probably preferable—it's really a Hobson's choice—to the reversion to stereotype taking place in the cheap action films now being produced in job lots for a mostly black market—all those super-cool private eyes, pimps, and pushers being, in his view, nothing more than the Buck seen from a new, more appreciative, angle of vision. There is an irony in this, in that the great pioneer of the Buck stereotype was D. W. Griffith, a Southerner projecting a racist's nightmare on the nation's screens a half century ago. That the new moviemakers are using this figure as hero rather than menace does not really change anything, and in fact this creation is turning out to be, as it should be, as distasteful to a new generation of thoughtful blacks as Griffith's version of it was to the then fledgling NAACP in 1914. Undoubtedly Shaft and Superfly and the rest provide a certain immediate fantasy-gratification for the black audience, a gratification that has long been available to white fans of such figures as John Wayne. But as Mr. Bogle sternly asserts, in the long run the New Buck (if one may so identify him) is no more socially edifying than his more obviously deplorable ancestor.

It is a measure of Mr. Bogle's judiciousness that he is very clear on this last point. It is one more bit of evidence showing that he has responded to a complex subject with a complex, non-ideological, aesthetically aware work, infused throughout with a patient humanity and written in a carefully tempered tone. Indeed, given the wretched quality of nearly all the historical scholarship about movies, most of it witlessly journalistic in style and aspiring to no more than the evocation of nostalgia as a substitute for a firm point of view, his work could stand as an example for those dealing with less immediately "relevant" (but no less worthwhile) film topics. Now, if only someone would do as well for the Indians. . . .

Young Revolutionaries

SDS. By KIRKPATRICK SALE. *Random House. 752 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by CARL GERSHMAN

IN April 1967 someone at the National Office of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) came

CARL GERSHMAN *is national chairman of the Young People's Socialist League.*

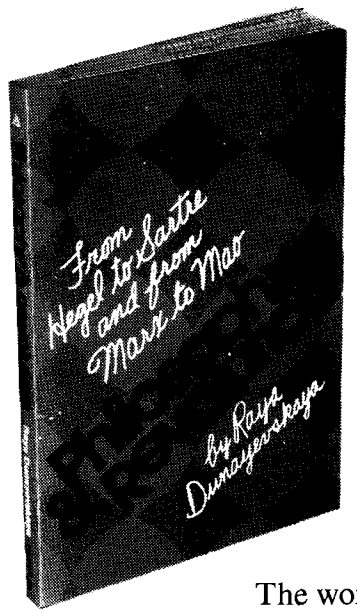
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

across a cartoon showing dozens of smiling children fleeing through a school gate and six angry guards helplessly chasing after them. "By instant and common agreement," writes Kirkpatrick Sale in *SDS*, "the cartoon was made part of the official letterhead of SDS stationery." This anecdote reveals a good deal more about SDS, its image of itself as well as its conception of American society, than Sale is able to do in over 750 pages. His book is too long, much longer than the subject deserves. It is filled with thousands of organizational details that could be of interest only to the devotee. Sale selects his material without discretion, and the only thing that holds the book together is the chronological chain of events.

Sale traces the early history of SDS from 1960, when it was the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), through the Port Huron statement of 1962 and the eventual dispute with the parent LID over the question of whether Communists should be excluded from membership in SDS. By October 1965, when the formal break took place, the two organizations had almost nothing in common. The LID was labor-oriented, anti-Communist, reformist; SDS looked to campus youth and the very poor as agents of change, and in a very short time it had moved from being "anti-anti-Communist" to being thoroughly pro-Communist, with its own internal divisions paralleling those in the Communist world. In the later 60's it evolved into an organization committed to revolution and, for many of its members, to terrorism as well.

SDS never had much use for ideology. The early SDS'ers claimed that ideology was a carryover from the past, whereas they were introducing something fresh on the American scene. This antipathy toward ideology was part of a more general anti-intellectualism that became more pronounced as time passed. In 1964 Tom Hayden proclaimed, "Theories don't mean a thing"; five years later the education secretary of SDS announced with pride that neither he nor the two other national officers had read a book in a year.

Just published—



The woman who has lived it all now writes about

PHILOSOPHY & REVOLUTION

From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao

by Raya Dunayevskaya

A lifelong Marxist, writer, and former secretary to Leon Trotsky, Raya Dunayevskaya offers a philosophy of liberation—a theory of revolution that is grounded in practice and by which, in turn, practice can be guided.

"An extraordinary work which I deeply admire . . . of great theoretical and political importance. . . ."—Erich Fromm

"Breaks new ground and should stimulate a good deal of debate and rethinking of many fundamental issues."—Noam Chomsky

A DELTA PAPERBACK $2.95

(Delacorte Press hardcover $8.95)

Dell Publishing Co., Inc.
1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (245 E. 47th St.) New York, N.Y. 10017

AN AMERICAN TRILOGY

Lines On The Death Of A Fisherman

Three Jews In A Tub

Dreamship

Three long novels by J. Inchardi, $10 each novel, post free, from Sirius Books, P.O. 177, Freeport, Maine 04032.

JEWISH PUBLICATION SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Free 32 page illustrated catalog just off press.

New and recently issued books for the entire family.

Learn how Jewish families obtain substantial savings on important books through membership in the JPS.

Jewish Publication Society of America, 222 N. 15th St. Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Sounds of Israel

What is Israel? An independent Jewish state, of course. An example to Jews everywhere. A 2,000-year-old dream. Israel is reality, strong, energetic, a blend of old and new. Israel is a land of contrasts, a coming together of Jews from the four corners of the earth, a joining of all strands of Jewish experience. And Israel is music—songs of a nation reborn, a land rebuilt, a people ingathered.

The sounds of Israel, in all their variety—joyous, wistful, nostalgic, solemn, triumphant—are stunningly captured in these two record albums, produced in Israel and sung in Hebrew by the country's leading artists.

Each record is 12", long-playing, 33 1/3 rpm. *in Stereo*

25 YEARS OF SONG FROM ISRAEL

Two records, 4 sides, 25 selections in all, this album brings you such distinctive voices as Shoshana Damari, Geula Gill, and Yaffa Yarkoni, singing the haunting *Bab-el-Wad*, the rousing *Land of Milk and Honey*, and the poignant *Believe Me the Day Will Come*, as well as *There Were Times, To the Desert, On the Negev Plains, Evening of Roses, Where Are Those Girls, Facing Mt. Sinai, Evening Comes, Kinneret, My Home Faces the Golan, Tomorrow, The Eucalyptus Grove, What a Girl, You, The Banana Man, Are You Laughing Or Crying?, Self-Respect, Jerusalem of Gold, Chase, Oseh Shalom, Elijah's Chair*, and *Open the Door*.

ISRAEL NOW

This handsome album is a treat for the eye as well as the ear. It contains 14 songs, plus a portfolio of Israeli scenes, accompanied by an informative text. The songs—a lusty *Hava Nagila*, a lively *Am Yisrael Hai (Israel Lives)*, an unforgettable *Jerusalem of Gold*—together constitute a musical embodiment of the culture and heritage of Israel. Also included are *Songs of My Beloved Country, Moonray, Honey, The Eucalyptus Grove, When the Lord Said . . ., Fear Not, Israel, Shabbat Hamalka, A Bucketful of Stars, Redeem The People, Uriah, Shula Chen* and *Oseh Shalom*.

Price for both albums $12.95

Jewish Book Club
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Please send _____ sets of 25 Years of Song From Israel and Israel Now at $12.95 for both stereo albums. My check for _____ includes all shipping costs.

(Return Guaranteed)

Name_____

Street_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

By that time the ideological vacuum had become filled with quotations from Lenin and Stalin, as well as Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Che Guevara.

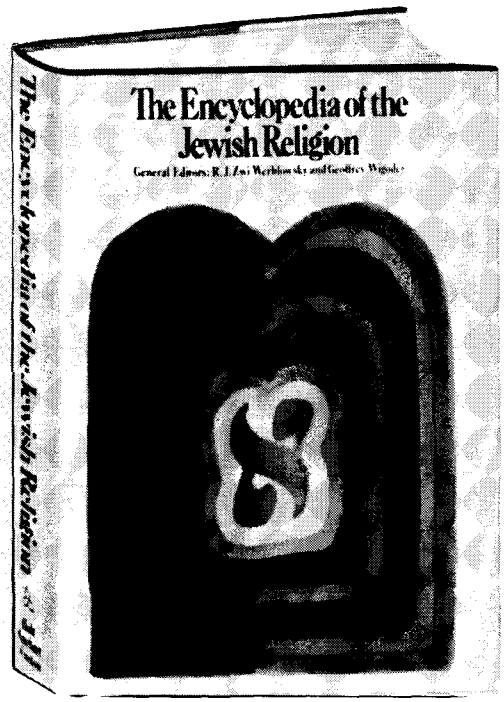
SDS suffered badly from its failure to develop a coherent ideology. In 1963 the organization undertook its first major political effort, the Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP) that encouraged middle-class students to abandon the campus for work in the "real world" of the slums. The move was opposed by Al Haber, the past SDS field secretary, who felt that the proper role for students was organizing and educating on campus. "'In the world,'" Haber observed, "has come to mean 'in the slum.' Besides being slightly sick, this suggests a highly perverted analysis of American society." But for most SDS'ers, the alliance of students and the poor (they made each other "feel real," according to Hayden) was the new instrument for changing America.

ERAP failed miserably, and by the mid-60's, with the escalation of the war in Vietnam, SDS returned to the campus and attempted to develop a new perspective. According to Sale, SDS discovered at this time that students themselves "felt trod upon by the society, in ways maybe not as obvious but just as pervasive as those used upon the poor." Radicalism came to be defined as the struggle for the liberation of oneself, as opposed to liberalism which was "action for others." This theory did not hold up to the challenge of the Maoist Progressive Labor party (PL) within SDS, which insisted on a platform of identification with the proletariat. PL went into SDS to raid the membership, and its doctrinaire cadres had an easy time of it, using time-honored totalitarian tactics to take over chapters and, ultimately, the whole organization.

The National Office faction of SDS could not handle PL. At first it turned to the Communist party for ideological assistance, then tried to ride on the prestige of an alliance with the Black Panthers, a tactic which backfired at the 1969 convention. (Among other points of difference, the Panthers could not abide the Weathermen, whom

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Did you know that the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is unknown in the Bible and Talmud? (see page 57) That Judaism frowns on celibacy? (see page 81) That the mystical Kabbalah has doctrines in common with Hinduism? (see page 389)



The complete, eighteen-dollar

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE JEWISH RELIGION

One monumental illustrated volume spanning the heritage of Jewish faith, ritual, mysticism, and ethics through all the ages from Ur of the Chaldees and Pharaonic Egypt to the present. Nearly 3,000 entries covering every aspect of Judaism including cultural parallels in pre-Hebrew Semitic paganism... the intricate relationship with Christianity and Islam... the religious practices of such exotic Jews as the black Falashas of Ethiopia and the Bene Israel Jews of Bombay (who have lived in India for 2300 years and claim they are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes).

FREE with membership in THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB

Ten years in preparation, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE JEWISH RELIGION places a library of knowledge about Judaism at your fingertips in one authoritative volume. The answers to your children's questions (and questions that you yourself have always wanted to ask) can be found here in a few moments. But in face of the temptations spread before you on every page, much self-discipline is required to put the book away once a question is answered. *Do you know the grounds on which polygamy is still technically permitted among Jews? See page 305.*

To turn these pages is to explore four thousand years of Judaism – its origins, history, scriptures, ceremonies, traditions, festivals, sacred languages (do you know that the Hebrew Bible contains sections not in Hebrew? See page 66), its 613 commandments through which every physical action becomes an act of worship.

Did you know that the words "Mazel Tov" are an ancient astrological formula? See page 254.

Here is the contrast between Jewish and Christian viewpoints on sex and marriage, body and soul (flesh isn't "evil" in Judaism; see page 365). All the multitudinous sects and rites of Judaism through four millennia are included... Ashkenazi and Sephardi... Orthodox, Conservative and Reform... the priestly Sadducees and their rabbinical rivals, the Pharisees (whose philosophy pervades the New Testament that denounces them)... The Qumran Community, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were written by Jews who awaited not just one Messiah but two. Here are the hidden Jews who lived for centuries in Persia disguised as Moslems and in Portugal and Majorca disguised as Catholics ... the dancing Hasidim, who still wear the formal costume of medieval Polish noblemen. Do you know what makes kosher wine kosher? See page 115. Does Judaism permit therapeutic abortion? See page 4.

All this and more is yours to explore and enjoy in THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE JEWISH RELIGION. Prepared by experts on three continents, published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston in collaboration with the Massadah Press of Israel, and illustrated with religious art and ritual objects from the great museums and private collections, it sells for eighteen dollars. It is yours FREE when you join The Jewish Book Club.

The benefits of membership

- *Free introductory offer* – the $18 *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Religion.*
- *Savings of up to 50%* on works by S. Y. Agnon, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Malamud, Abraham Joshua Heschel and best-sellers such as *My People, Israel 25,* and *Rembrandt's Hat.*
- *Free newsletter* – lively, informative news about books of Jewish interest not always reviewed in the general press nor stocked by local stores.
- *Minimum obligation* – you need accept as few as four books during the next 12 months.
- *Valuable home library* – of works recommended by Commentary's editors.
- *Exclusive membership* – limited to subscribers of *Commentary Magazine.* If you are not yet a *Commentary* subscriber, now is the time to become one and save. (If you already subscribe, you may renew your subscription for only $12.00 and enjoy these benefits.)

THE JEWISH BOOK CLUB
165 East 56th Street, New York, New York 10022

☐ Please send me my FREE copy of THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE JEWISH RELIGION. At the same time, enter my subscription to COMMENTARY for the next 12 months at $12.00 (or renew my current subscription when it expires), and enroll me in The Jewish Book Club. I agree to accept as few as 4 of the monthly selections or alternates during the next 12 months at the special members' prices, (plus a small charge for postage and handling). All selections and alternates will be described for me in advance in The Jewish Book News, and I may decline any of them by returning the printed card provided.

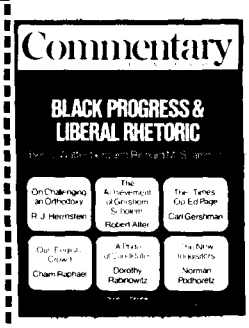
☐ Check for $12.00 enclosed (outside U.S.A. add $3.00) and you will send me two extra issues of **Commentary.**

☐ Please bill me for $12.00.

NAME_____

STREET_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bobby Seale attacked as "those jive bourgeois national socialists and national chauvinists.") In desperation, the National Office faction moved to expel PL; since PL wouldn't leave, the National Office then led its own followers out of the convention.

The National Office faction eventually split into two factions, the only one of significance being the Weathermen who were carried along by the momentum of escalating extremism. After a few experiments with revolutionary violence, the Weathermen went underground. A subsequent explosion in a New York townhouse that several young terrorists had transformed into a bomb factory constituted a fitting dénouement to the history of SDS in the 60's.

"WHY is it no one can talk from an SDS perspective?" National Secretary Greg Calvert asked in 1966. The answer is that SDS had no point of view that could be clearly articulated. The various attempts to develop new "perspectives" could not alter the fact that the consistent driving force behind the American New Left was guilt, a revulsion of affluent youths against themselves. As one SDS'er put it, "The fight to destroy the shit in us is part of building a new society." Within the Weathermen communes this fight took the form of a collective effort to stamp out the individuality of every member, to the point where no one could even go for a walk without the entire group's discussing it. But the disease had infected the movement long before the rise of the Weathermen, and Sale's book is worth reading if only as a case study in the steady and apparently inexorable descent of America's "best" youth into nihilism and totalitarianism.

In retrospect this descent may be seen to have begun in the decision to break with the LID over its policy—which Sale castigates—of excluding "advocates of dictatorship and totalitarianism" from membership, and to have reached a logical conclusion in the subsequent takeover of SDS by PL. But the New Leftists were hardly the innocent victims of the PL cadres; by the late 60's they had become full-fledged totalitarians themselves, just not as well-organized. To the PL chant, "Mao, Mao, Mao Tse-tung," the New Leftists would respond, "Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh." They saw Cuba and North Vietnam as revolutionary models, extolled the Palestinian terrorists (this evoked "strangulating outrage" among some Jewish SDS'ers, according to Sale), and had only contempt for "bourgeois civil liberties."

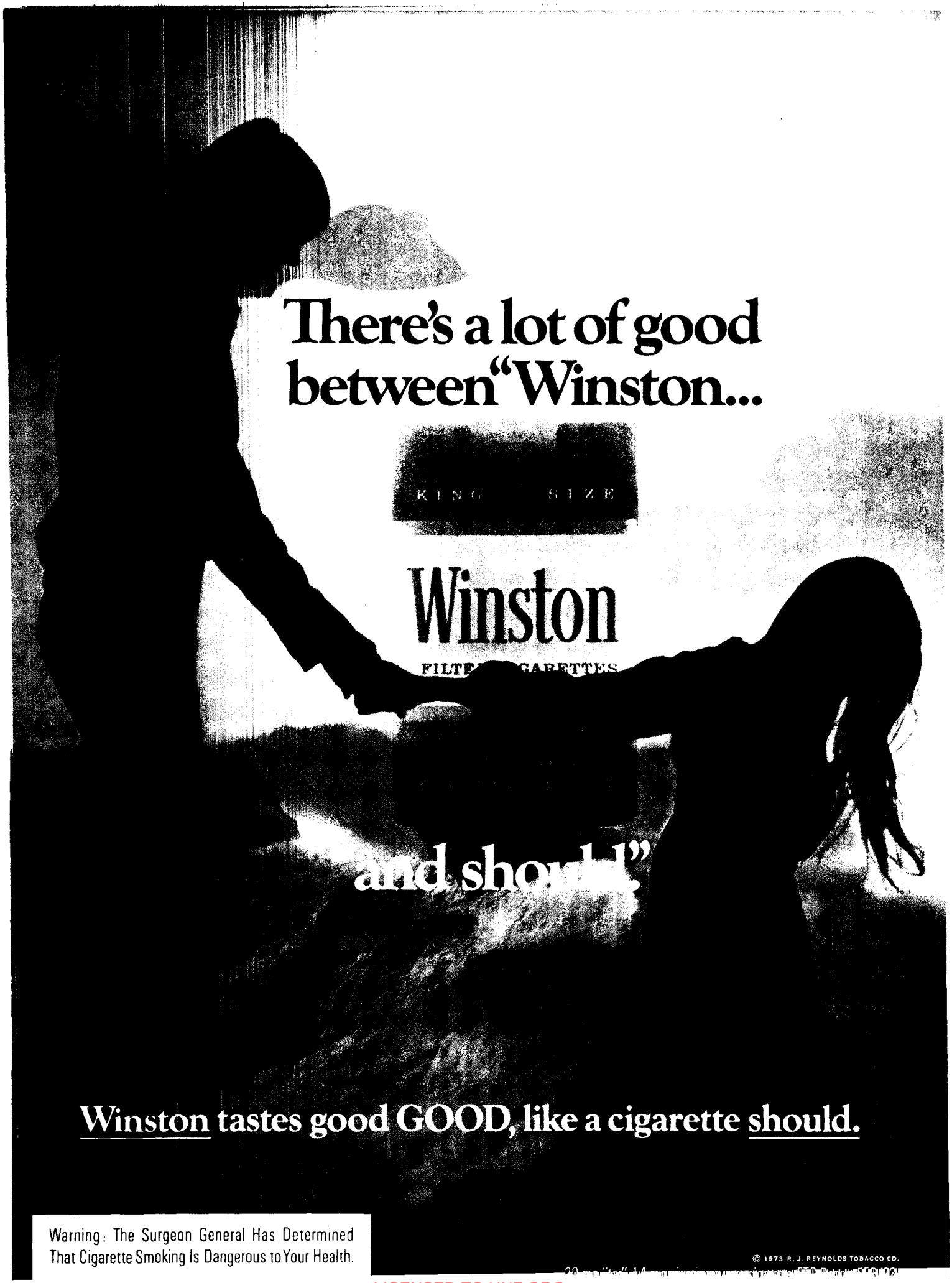
Sale, who completely shares the New Left view of America and seems to have learned nothing from the collapse of the movement based on that view, sheds no light at all on the process by which the romantic idealists of the early SDS turned into the primitive authoritarians and terrorists of the late 60's. He simply blames America for alienating "the best of the generation." (It should be noted that Sale is not too friendly toward PL, though he is willing to grant its "unselfish devotion to the workers' cause.") And because of his emotional identification with SDS, Sale is unable to assess accurately the movement's true political impact.

Thus, though at one point he obliquely hints that the tactics of SDS may have strengthened Nixon's "law-and-order" appeal during the 1968 election, Sale quickly drops the point to return to the drama of the revolution. And though he admits that the Weatherman rampage through Chicago in 1969 was "tactically foolhardy," it was nonetheless in his view "a genuine act, however feeble, of revolution." Commenting on a similar movement in Russia three-quarters of a century ago, George Plekhanov offered greater insight:

> Thus in the name of revolution, the anarchists serve—the cause of reaction; in the name of morality they approve the most immoral acts; in the name of individual liberty they trample under foot all the rights of their fellows.

IF SDS was significant, it was so not as an organization (unlike, for example, the American Communist party) but as a quasi-political expression of the cultural upheavals of the 60's. In the perspective of the ensuing years those upheavals have come to seem less and less a revolution and more and more a counterrevolution, an obstruction to genuine change rather than an enlargement of the possibilities of progress, and certainly not that great leap forward in the name of humanity so avidly proclaimed by the New Left and its intellectual apologists at the time and now eulogized by Sale in this book. The "lesson" of SDS is a negative one, the lesson drawn by Plekhanov, and it is one that needs to be remembered if a commitment to democratic social change is ever to be wedded to an understanding of the possibilities and limitations of organized political action.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


There's a lot of good between "Winston...
KING SIZE
Winston
FILTER CIGARETTES
and sho[illegible]"
Winston tastes good GOOD, like a cigarette should.
Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.
© 1973 R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"We rich men count our happiness to lie in the little superfluities not in necessities."

–Quoted by Plutarch, AD 46-120

The truly rich man isn't the man with the most money. He's the man who enjoys those delightful superfluities of life...a custom-made putter, two seats on the aisle on opening night, an excellent Scotch whisky. Like Ancestor. Twelve years old. A gentle-spoken whisky, but brave at heart. Like all the little superfluities, it gives a lot of pleasure.

BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY • 86.8 PROOF • © SCHENLEY IMPORTS CO., N.Y., N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED